The National Future Farmer

April – May, 1989

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The Bottom Line

American politics and system of government is something that much of the world has trouble trying to understand. But the system works and at no time is this more evident than when there is a change of administration in Washington, D.C. Even though it is the same party this time, we have just observed a peaceful change in our government at the national level.

Usually we watch with interest as the new president names his cabinet. Getting less recognition is another group of appointments that have a very important role in the government on a day to day basis. One such appointment is of special interest to everyone associated with FFA.

Frederick D. McClure will run the congressional liaison office for President Bush. Hewill have major responsibilities for helping the president work with a Democratically-controlled Congress.

Fred, as he is known by his many friends, was a national FFA officer in 1973-74. He grew up in San Augustine, Texas, where his father was a school principal and vocational agriculture teacher. Fred was very active in FFA and served a term as the Texas FFA president before being elected to national FFA office.

After graduation from high school, Fred entered Texas A&M University and majored in agricultural economics. He also served as president of the student body his senior year. After college, Fred went to Washington, D.C. to work for Senator John Tower but returned to Texas to run Tower's state offices. He then entered law school at Baylor University and joined a law firm after graduation but was again asked to join Tower's staff in 1983. Later he was recruited to the Reagan White House as part of the congressional liaison office (the office he now heads), concentrating on the Senate. Leaving the White House in 1986, Fred became a vice president at Texas Air Corporation and remained there until his recent White House appointment.

Friends who know Fred describe him as a "great people person" which should serve him well in his new position. You never can tell where the people who wear the blue and gold jackets will end up, can you?

Wilson Carnes

Mailbag

New Directions

What a pleasure to read "New Directions" in the December-January issue of *The National FUTURE FARMER.*

I graduated from Purdue University and lived most of my life on a ranch or on a farm in a rural area where an FFA program was available. Having taught in an urban high school that does not have an FFA program, I have often felt that both the FFA and the urban school missed a great opportunity. Having had the pleasure of seeing my own daughter grow, develop and participate in the many FFA educational activities, I realize first-hand what students in city schools are missing.

Teaching agricultural concepts to a larger percentage of secondary school students can only benefit both the students and the agribusiness interests in our country.

Margaretha Gebhart
Springport, Indiana

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Leave Things the Same

I was reading an article in *The National FUTURE FARMER* that Dale F. Johnson wrote in the February-March, 1989 issue.

I agree that all members of FFA should get to vote on any changes about FFA. I think they should leave things the way they use to be.

Tennie Jessee
Webber Falls, Oklahoma

Meeting the Challenges

As an FFA member, we must meet the challenges of the future. The hope for tomorrow and the advancement of today is depending on us. Believe in yourself, be positive, and go for it. You are the foundation of this great organization.

We must work together. We must show how positive attitudes can make the difference between success and failure.

Let's show America that the FFA is the future. It is the "Leading Edge."

Chance F. Jobe
Romance, Arkansas

News From Massachusetts

I have been an active member of the FFA for two years. I receive *The National FUTURE FARMER*, but can't remember ever seeing an article or news about Massachusetts. I feel we are just as involved in the FFA as other states so I am asking for some recognition for my state.

Kate Zanoni
Quincy, Massachusetts

Proud to Be a Member

I am proud to be a member of the FFA; we are not a dying breed. I see the world around me and notice that there would be no world without "farmers."

I have been in FFA for only four years, but I have grown inward as well as outward. It really encourages me to be able to go anywhere in the state of Colorado and talk to someone who is in FFA that I have never met.

Some FFA members may be upset because of the changes made at National Convention, but everything changes through the years in order to cope with the demands of the future.

FFA is more than a name. It is an organization—a unity of those who cooperate. We need to cooperate in order to keep FFA strong!

JoEllen Murphy
La Veta, Colorado

Chapter Closings

After reading "No More FFA" in the October-November, 1988 issue, I have found the closing of chapters increasing. Right now they are trying to close down our chapter for the third time in five years. Its a continuing problem that we can't overlook.

Scott McRae
Placentia, California

Keep trying!

I noted the letter from Dennis Mueller "Why not Farming?" in the February-March, 1989 issue of your magazine.

I hope Dennis does finally make it in farming. I, too, went through a lot of discouragement from family and friends, but finally made it several years after graduating from high school and college, and establishing a business career that would help pay the way. My advice to him and any other young man or woman interested in farming is to keep wanting to! It can happen.

Dennis and others like him should go to college, graduate in any field they like, and enter a farm related or non-farm related business or profession as a starting point. When the opportunity to enter farming does come, he or she will be better prepared for all of the challenges and will have a business or profession to fall back on or help make farming more fun.

Oklahoma

This encouraging letter was signed but the author asked to remain anonymous.-Ed.

1989 FFA Calendar

I am writing to tell you how disappointed I am with the 1989 FFA calendar. The editors may have used a food theme with their recipes, but they lost the colorful contents of previous calendars.

There was an FFA and 4-H photo contest display at the FFA convention career show. Those pictures were super and I am sure could be made available. As a former instructor, I always used old calendar pictures for FFA Week displays.

Francis Steiner
Granton, Wisconsin

Send letters or notes with name, address and chapter to MAILBAG, The National FUTURE FARMER, P.O. Box 15160, Alexandria, VA 22309. All letters are subject to editing.

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News In Brief

Board Makes Decisions

The National FFA Board of Directors met at the FFA Center January 23-26 to make decisions on a number of important issues.

The Board ratified the 18 constitutional amendments, dues increase and other actions taken by the delegates at the 1988 National FFA Convention. National dues for FFA members will be $3.50 beginning at the start of the 1989-90 school year.

A new job in the area of membership development was approved for a two-year period. The position will be a "program specialist" who will work to increase membership in the FFA.The Board approved a committee to examine and make recommendations concerning the Official FFA Manual, including ceremonies, creed and other text except the Constitution and Bylaws.

The new waterfall scarf offered by the Supply Service was declared as an official dress item by the FFA Board of Directors

WCP Staff Named

Staffs have been named for both locations of the 1989 Washington Conference Program.

At the Key Bridge Marriott, director Cheryl Helmeid from Wisconsin will be assisted by: Denise Tappy, Colorado; Scott Stump, Indiana; Mickey McCall, North Carolina and Shane Stewart, Oklahoma.

The Westpark Hotel staff will consist of director Darin Coert from California and counselors Joan Nold, South Dakota; Maureen Barber, Iowa; Matt Rekeweg, Indiana and Ricky Warren, North Carolina.

WCP will run from June 12 to July 29. Cost for the conference is $350.00, the same as in 1988.

Foundation Sets Record

The National FFA Foundation set a new fund raising record in 1988, raising $3,370,155.76. That figure is the largest ever invested in the FFA by corporate and private sponsors. It was a 10.9 percent gain over 1987, which was also a record-breaking year.

Central American Students Arrive

Nine students from Zamorano College in Honduras arrived in the U.S. in mid-January to participate in the Work Experience Abroad (WEA) program.

The students are from Ecuador, Honduras and El Salvador and all have either graduated or are currently studying at the Zamorano College of Agriculture. They will be working in and learning about U.S. agriculture for the rest of this year. Most of the students are working on Midwest farms. They are the first students from Zamorano College to participate in WEA.

Numbers Reveal Interest

Livestock judging was the most popular FFA judging contest in 1988, according to a recently released report of chapter involvement in FFA programs. The annual release, "Participation in Selected FFA Activities" is compiled by the Awards department of the National FFA Organization.

Of the 7,776 FFA chapters in the nation, 62.8 percent participated in livestock judging above the chapter level. The next-highest favorite judging contests were dairy judging at 45.1 percent and agricultural mechanics at 33.1 percent. The lowest participation in a contest was the Nursery/Landscape contest, where 11.1 percent of the chapters competed.

The report also revealed that 32.1 percent of all FFA chapters participated in the Food For America program, an all-time high since the program began in 1975. The Building Our American Communities program held fairly constant at 23.8 percent, down from 24.6 percent in 1987.

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Looking Ahead

USDA Photo by Ron Nichols, OCPA

Soil and water conservation is increasing dramatically nationwide as a result of recent farm legislation. By tying USDA program benefits to soil conservation efforts, USDA officials say the nation's long-term agriculture production outlook will be greatly enhanced.

National Conservation Efforts Include FFA Members

If you're seeing more wildlife in the countryside these days, noticing more farmland planted in grass or trees, or seeing less sediment in streams, you're seeing the results of some major changes in agricultural conservation programs.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates more than 200 million acres of farmland may be better protected as a result of the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985.

Its conservation reserve program has been called the most important agricultural conservation effort of the 20th century. Under the program, farmers are converting some of the nation's most highly erodible cropland to protective cover of trees and grass.

To date, nearly 240,000 farmers have put more than 25 million acres into the reserve. Up to 45 million acres may be entered into the reserve by its 1990 deadline.

Other provisions encourage farmers to develop and carry out conservation plans for highly erodible farmland, to preserve wetlands, and to leave highly erodible grassland and woodland in grass or trees rather than converting it to cropland.

Under one of the provisions, USDA's Soil ConservationService estimates farmers will be developing 800,000 conservation plans by January 1, 1990, to stay eligible for certain USDA benefits.

In August, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture George S. Dunlop and Assistant Secretary of Education Bonnie Guiton signed an agreement to provide agricultural educators with the necessary technical assistance to accelerate the teaching of soil and water conservation and natural resource management.

With this background, FFA members will be able to help farmers understand their responsibilities under the 1985 Farm Bill, possibly by helping conduct group conservation planning meetings.

This is a cooperative effort joining the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Education and particularly agriculture education and FFA.

Another New Use For Corn Cobs

The process for making a no-calorie, high-fiber flour from corn fiber, developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has been licensed by a company that expects to sell the product to firms making fiber-rich bread, cereals, doughnuts and other foods.

Mt. Pulaski Products, Inc., in Illinois, will produce the dietary fiber using a process patented by chemist J. Michael Gould and biologist Lee B. Dexter of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

"The process softens the fibrous parts of corn cobs and other cereal crops so they can be ground and used as a no-calorie, high-fiber product," said Gould. "With a taste panel and other tests, we found the material could boost the fiber content of baked goods such as pancake and cake mixes by up to 30 percent without affecting taste. And the fiber does not add calories."

With the new venture, the Mt. Pulaski firm expects to provide 25 to 30 new jobs for rural central Illinois, while doubling its volume of business, said R. Scott Steinfort, the firm's president and general manager. The firm currently processes corn cobs into carriers used in polishing agents and other industrial products. The fiber will be made from the filmy outer portion of the cob that remains after the kernels are removed.

"What we hope to do is help fill the tremendous need for fiber in the American diet," Steinfort said. "We are also going to turn an agricultural by-product into a usable dietary product. That'll be a real plus for farmers in our area."

Corn cob fiber is an insoluble fiber as are most brans, in contrast with soluble fibers such as pectin found in most fruits. Insoluble fibers have been credited in medical studies with lowering blood cholesterol, said Kay M. Behall, an ARS research nutritionist in Beltsville, Maryland.

Safety Efforts Paying Off

The number of estimated ATV-related injuries declined by 19 percent for the first six months of 1988, as compared to the same period for 1987, according to the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America.

Statistics released by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) do not reflect the increased number of ATVs in use. Factoring this in, the injury rate for that period declined 23 percent. This decline marks the fourth year in a row that the ATV injury rate has dropped.

In 1983, the four major U.S. ATV distributors—Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, and Yamaha—established a centralized safety resource called the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America to foster and promote the safe and responsible use of ATVs.

Four-legged Planters

A U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist is researching the possibility of cattle and sheep reseeding rangeland. Jerry R. Barrow, a plant geneticist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, is putting the seed in the animals' regular meals and then relying on them to deposit the seed in their droppings. "Our idea is to use livestock to carry grass seed to remote or nearly inaccessible areas of the range."

He said the first trials in the study, started last spring, show that about 10 percent of the seed passes through the animals without being chewed or digested. Of that seed, up to 80 percent can germinate.

Some ranchers currently spend up to $300 an acre to restore grasses and beneficial shrubs to areas of their ranches. Other ranchers find it impossible at any cost to improve land that is so rugged and remote that only cattle and sheep can get there.

Barrow got the idea for the study because he knew that cattle were responsible for spreading seed from mesquite shrubs from one part of the rangeland to another. If it worked for unwanted plants, he reasoned, why not for spreading desirable seed on the range.

He said the seed "would be in a near-perfect potting mix. Cattle manure contains moisture so seed can germinate and also nutrients that newly sprouted plants need."

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New Frontiers in the Lone Star State

Overhauled agriculture curriculum makes debut in Texas

By Michelle Domangue

Destination: Peach Point Wildlife Management Area along the Gulf coast. Some 50 students from Tidehaven High School, near El Maton, Texas, climb aboard buses for a day in the wild.

A state game biologist guides students through the new preserve, where they see firsthand what wildlife management is all about. During the field trip, they identify species, hear about efforts to eradicate wild hogs and look at shrimp production beds under development. In groups of about fifteen , they also take turns riding on a giant ATV designed for swamp travel.

The trip, combining a fun break from school routine with intensive instruction, was a hit. The outing was part of a new course, Wildlife and Recreation Management, one of the most popular in Texas' new high school agriculture curriculum.

Gone forever are the days of Production Agriculture I, II, III and IV. In their place, a smorgasboard of twenty-three one-semester classes, each focusing on one area of special interest, has turned Texas' high school agriculture program on its ear.

The new approach has its critics, but many students and teachers welcome the change, which this year dramatically reversed a decline in enrollment.

The number of students enrolled in agriculture classes has soared to 60,673 statewide, up twenty-nine percent from the year before, based on December figures. The number went up even though '87 figures included junior high students; this year , seventh and eighth grade agriculture courses were dropped.

"Something's working," says Jay Eudy, director of Agriculture Education at the Texas Education Agency. Eudy explains how this revolution came about:

Back in 1984, concern about declining academic standards led to much public discussion, media attention and even legislation to improve the schools. As the battle cry of "Back to basics!" raged, vocational high school education took some pretty hard knocks, especially as critics shared tales of agriculture students missing class to show animals. Anything seen as taking time away from basic literacy, math and science became fair game.

In this reform-minded climate, recalls Eudy, the State Board of Education told him flatly in the spring of 1985: "There will be no more Ag I, II, III, IV in the state of Texas. Either you fix it, or we'll fix it."

Only about 3 percent of the population is involved in actual production, he adds. "It was obvious the curriculum needed change."

Designing New Classes

So began a long planning process. A group of about fifty "thinkers," including educators from high schools and universities and people from agriculture's various industries, wrote the new curriculum based on skills needed today. The new courses broaden greatly the scope of agricultural education, at least as it has been known in Texas.

As a result, Texas students can now register for courses not offered before this year in most schools. From Equine Science to Horticultural Plant Production to Agribusiness Management and Marketing, they're signing up in droves. Next year will even bring a pilot program in aquaculture (fish farming) in this new, wider view of what is agriculture.

Of course, many "old friends" remain—agriculture mechanics, metal fabrication and animal, plant and soil science. But the way even those courses are taught has completely changed.

In the past, each agriculture course was a prerequisite for the next, with Ag I stressing leadership and touching lightly on animal, soil and plant science and agriculture mechanics. "It was too much for a year," says Conroe instructor Charles Parsley. Each year, the knowledge base grew, but nothing was covered in depth, teachers say.

"We weren't teaching agribusiness much at all in the old curriculum, and we needed to," says Eudy.

Teacher David Howell of Cotton Center High School in the Texas Panhandle agrees. "The old curriculum was ninety percent production ag," he says. "My community is in a 100 percent agricultural area, but I've seen maybe twenty students in all that time go into farming. Probably 50 percent have gone into agribusiness, though, so the new curriculum is more relevant.

Freedom of Choice

Specialization, or tackling one topic for a whole semester, is a chief difference between old and new. With courses offering one main topic, requiring no prerequisite and committing the student for only half a year, students can sign up for what interests them and not have to suffer through other material that doesn't.

"Ag I-IV sometimes took the shotgun approach," explains teacher Rodney Montello of Wharton High School. In the new curriculum, "we've nailed it down to kids take exactly what they want."

But not all teachers like that.

One complains that high school students are too young to specialize, another that students need to know a little about a lot of things to be "well-rounded."

But many teachers and students seem to favor the new set-up that allows course selection based on interest.

"Ag is an elective anyway," says Steve Clontz, teacher at Tidehaven High School. "Why shouldn't kids get to pick what they want to take?"

"Not all students are interested in every aspect of agriculture," points out Surcy Peoples, sophomore at Conroe High School. "The new courses are broken down (into separate subjects) and are drawing more students."

With plans to become a veterinarian, Peoples appreciates the greater detail in his Animal Science class than he saw in Production Ag I last year. "We spend more time on certain things—more in depth on rations and feed supplements, for instance."

Peoples' school, located on the edge of Houston, is large, with a student body of 3,200, ag-class enrollment of nearly 300 and the state's second largest FFA chapter. Yet at Tidehaven's much smaller agriculture department, surrounded by grain sorghum and cotton fields, senior Michael Holzapfel tells the same story. "I like the new curriculum," says Holzapfel, now taking Landscape Design, Construction and Maintenance after three years in Production Ag. "It goes into more detail; you get to do more with it." He's noticed fellow students signing up more readily for the one-semester classes, including some who never thought of taking agriculture before this year. Teachers there note ag enrollment has almost doubled since last year.

Survey Says...

Students at some schools had a voice in deciding which of the new courses would be offered this year, which might help explain their enthusiasm.

Agriculture departments in those Texas high schools that offer agriculture employ from one to four teachers. Even the largest departments can't offer all 23 courses at once, so student surveys helped some school officials decide what to teach this year.

"The kids voted on courses that we had the facilities to offer," says Clontz, at Tidehaven. "So their attitude was: 'We're doing this because its what we want to do.' They had a positive attitude from the beginning."

Whether a school had—or could afford to get—the facilities for a particular course, like a greenhouse for horticulture, played a role, too. Teachers seem to agree, as well, that courses must fit into the communities where they're taught.

At Cotton Center, for instance, "the wildlife and equine courses wouldn't fit our situation," says Howell. Cotton and corn production are the main activities in his area of Northwest Texas. So out of the total courses possible, "we're looking mainly at mechanics and management." Size of the school had an impact, too, with Howell the only ag teacher in a high school of just 45 students—and only three seniors.

Across the state at Wharton High School, though, teachers stress the relevance of the very courses Cotton Center eliminated.

Voters legalized track betting in Texas last year, points out Montello. Plans to build race tracks in the region are much in the news. "We have not realized the impact that will have," he says. "We have to train students for the future. I see Equine Science as being very, very timely."

Fellow teacher Harold Shafer notes that managing wildlife has become a big part of farm and ranch earnings, making Wildlife and Recreation Management a valuable course.

Not only is sale of hunting and fishing leases a way to increase farm income, adds state FFA Executive Secretary Walter York, the course emphasizes protecting the environment, a big issue in agriculture today.

What Are We?

But are these new courses hands-on, vocational in nature and fun, or are they more academic, scientific and technical?

(Continued on Page 12)

Photos by Patsy Wiginton

Julia Westbrook, Andre Franklin and Stuart Petersen learn about world agriculture at Bay City High School. "Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology" is one of the more controversial of the new Texas classes.

Equine Science has emerged as a favorite for students across Texas, including Tonya Pruet, left. In places like Tidehaven High School, above, the equine course and other new classes are attracting a brand of students who might not have enrolled in agriculture n past years.

(Continued from Page 11)

Tidehaven senior Mike Mondrik practices archery skills taught in Wildlife and Recreation class.

"There's as much hands-on activity as possible, but of a challenging nature," he says. "Lab-type experience will attract students—if the student has an opportunity to participate and get credit. Hands-on qualifies as 'vocational' yet is often no different than a science lab course."

To teacher Jerry Dornak at Ganado High School, "the new curriculum seems more academic" than the old: "In Equine Science, for instance, there's some practical, like shoeing horses and a field trip to an area tack business. But we're almost always in the classroom, and it's the same with wildlife. In old ag classes, we were in the shop a lot of the time. I'd say it's taking more of an academic bounce to it."

Parsley, from Conroe, has found the same thing. "I think the new curriculum is more academic, more specialized and technical," he says. "It takes a lot of study and work to pass, and there's a college preparatory twist. It gives students more insight into careers--they get an idea of what would be involved in each field."

Peoples, a Conroe student, has found a big difference year to year in this respect. "You have to study," he says. "Last year, I really didn't have to put forth much effort." Now he "definitely" believes his courses are preparing him for college.

Working Out the Kinks

One course, though, with its more "academic" direction, does seem to generate almost universal complaints—even from teachers otherwise tickled about the new curriculum. "Introduction to World Agricultural Science and Technology," one of two courses freshmen are allowed to take, is criticized as inappropriate for ninth graders. With very little hands-on activity, the course concentrates on weighty topics like the "historical significance of agriculture" and "interdependancy of agriculture and world politics." The class also addresses etiquette, grooming and health habits, which teacher Wayne Bender of Bay City High School calls "more of a homemaking curriculum."

"The beginning course is dry," says Erwin Janszen, teacher at Palacios High School. "I can read it and see the importance of it — banking, finance, manners, how you get along in the world. But to get it across to a bunch of 14-year-olds..." he trails off, looking hopeless. "If you can't create interest with your ninth-grader, then you're not going to retain them," he continues. "Agriculture is competing with every other elective and in direct competition with academic fields."

It seems to be the only turkey in an otherwise popular collection of courses, and the consensus, from Eudy and teachers alike, is that the course's content will eventually be adjusted.

Otherwise, agriculture continues to attract students. A case in point: Colin Garrett, senior at Wharton, is new both to ag and the FFA this year. He studied wildlife in the fall and animal science this spring.

Last year, when he signed up, "I was looking for a fun class," he says. The description of the wildlife course said 'field trip-oriented.' I went into it as a blowoff class." But the honor student, with plans to attend a major university and law school, found to his surprise that both the teaching and the subject matter impressed him. "I learned a lot."

His experience has been happening all over the state— students who wouldn't have enrolled in ag before this year are drawn by the new courses and the fact that they're only signing up for one semester at a time. Garrett finds at his school there's "definitely a different concept" emerging of just who signs up for agriculture now.

Student opinion isn't unanimous, of course, though the majority seem to prefer the new curriculum.

A few "old timers," like senior Tonya Pruett of Bay City High School, prefer the old Production Ag. "I like the old ways better," the FFA chapter treasurer says firmly.

Yet personal preference aside, she sees the advantages of the new set-up. "I think it will draw a lot more people and can create more interest and get the program back on its feet. There's more to offer now." •••

The new Texas classes and the FFA

How are the sweeping changes in Texas' high school agriculture curriculum affecting the state's FFA program?

Membership rose 13 percent—to 52,112—from December 1987 to December 1988, reports Walter York, state FFA executive secretary based at the Texas Education Agency (TEA). But enrollment in agriculture courses has jumped even more—up 29 percent year to year. Quite a few of these students, then, aren't joining local chapters.

We have 220 to 230 in FFA, but 300 in ag classes," says Charles Parsley, teacher at Conroe High School. "So we're getting students who could care less about FFA. This has hurt as far as percentage (of FFA members).

But Jay Eudy, director of agricultural education at TEA, believes the degree of participation will go up in time. "Our percentage is not as high as we'd like to have," he admits. But in the new curriculun's first year, "we've really gotten ourselves into a new world. We have a different type of student. They've come in because of the curriculum, and we weren't ready. We're planning workshops for teachers to address this."

Yet experience seems to vary by school, and many of these new students are jumping into the organization.

At Ganado High School, senior Julie Camacho never took ag before this year. "I don't know anything about it," she says. "I thought it was just for people who live out in the country."

An interest in horticulture drew her to sign up for some of the new classes. Now, she bubbles over as she talks about FFA—not only did she join, but she has participated in skills team competitions and was elected chaplain.

Linda Parsley, on the other hand, is an old hand at taking agriculture and participating in FFA. The Palacios High School senior predicts the new program, with specific, one-semester courses in a wide variety of ag-related topics, will attract new students—and new members.

"I think it's more appealing to a lot more students," she says. "One of our biggest problems is getting new members, and I think the new curriculum is attracting them."

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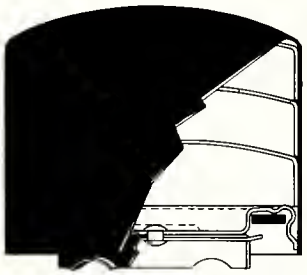

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Jason Williams, chapter president of the Sycamore, Illinois, FFA Chapter welcomes, left to right, Salvadoran students Bedita Romero, Ana Moran and Hazzel Gonzalez to a chapter meeting with Jenny Andersen, chapter vice president.

El Salvador Students Experience America

Top 100 high school students visit the United States with the help of FFA

In hopes of educating El Salvador's top high school students about life in the United States, 97 FFA host families across the country opened their homes to the young scholars during the 1988 Thanksgiving season.

The students were taking part in "Experience America," a program carried-out by the International department of the National FFA Organization in cooperation with Partners, a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering understanding of Central American and Caribbean countries. The exchange is part of the Central American Peace Scholarship Program funded by the United States Agency for International Development. FFA was contracted to work on the project because of its rural placement experience and national network of young people.

The purpose of "Experience America" was to expose the young Salvadorans to "typical American lifestyles and the democratic system of government," said Tricia Bry, program coordinator, FFA International department.

The 100 Salvadoran students were selected based on their scholastic and community service achievements. Many were valedictorians of their graduating class. The students stayed with FFA host families for two weeks in California, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Virginia and Wisconsin.

The students gathered in Son Sonate, El Salvador, for one week of orientation before coming to the U.S. They arrived on November 12 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for one week of orientation on the campus of Louisiana State University.

The students were placed in host families where there was an active FFA chapter and a Spanish program in the high school. Few of the Salvadorans spoke fluent English, so a requirement was that one host family member had to speak Spanish. A majority of the interpreters were high school students who had taken Spanish.

During the host visit stays, the students were introduced to local government leaders and leaders of civic organizations to see how individuals could impact local communities.

Many of the Salvadorans were surprised by what they found after living with their American host families. "The image that I had of the United States was that it was a country where the people were cold and unsympathetic," said Manuel Guevara, who stayed with the Donald Waddell family in Blackhawk, South Dakota. "After living with the people, I discovered that it was totally the opposite, that they are loving, giving, and sincere people."

They also witnessed a different standard of living in the United States. "For a lot of these students this program was an opportunity to see another country that they normally would never have, because many of them are from very poor families," says Bry. "Only 20-30 percent of these top students will go on to college simply because they and their families don't have enough money to pay the tuition. They have no choice but to take a job–and jobs are hard to find."

At the end of the host family stays, the students returned to Louisiana, this time to New Orleans, for a "Political Process Conference" that focused on the United States' system of government. Twelve FFA members from California, Illinois, Iowa, New Mexico, Oregon and Wisconsin were on hand to help the Salvadorans learn how to run orderly meetings using parliamentary procedure. "They learned to give everybody a chance to talk and give their opinion, which is very different for them," says Bry. "They let people express their opinion whether it was accepted by the majority or not."

The scholars also discussed what they were going to do with what they had learned in the U.S. once they returned home on December 13.

Land of Hope

El Salvador is an important country to the United States. Although the size of El Salvador is about the same as Massachusetts, it is located in the heart of Central America where the stability of governments is a constant struggle. The U.S.-backed government in El Salvador is opposed by communist guerilla troops. The two forces usually meet in the country's northern mountains.

According to Guevara, the situation presented on American TV newscasts is not altogether accurate. "There is war, but there is not war and shooting in all of the country. The reporters exaggerate the news. More than anything, the war is political."

Many of the students said they were surprised by the amount of personal freedom Americans have to go where they want, when they want, without fear. They also saw the U.S. as the "land of opportunity." "I saw a lot of opportunities for the people to achieve whatever they wish, said Guevara.

And if he saw the U.S. as the "land of opportunity," what would he call El Salvador? "'The land of hope,' because I keep the hope that one day it will be better than it is today." Bry agrees. "Despite all of their problems, they are some of the most proud and optimistic people I have ever seen in my life," she said. •••

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The New Ag Professionals:

Processing Plant Engineer

By Andrew Markwart

Photo by Author

Agricultural engineer Jody Strickland designs ways for the cellulose plant to work more efficiently.

Since FFA members seem to like trivia contests, here is a question that is bound to stump even the sharpest chapter president: what agricultural commodity is used to make the white, fluffy, absorbant padding in disposable baby diapers?

"Cotton?" No.

"Flax?" Sorry.

"Then it must be some artificial fiber like polyester." Wrong, remember it is an agricultural commodity.

The answer is pine trees. In their natural form, pine trees could prove to be uncomfortable for bottoms of America's toddlers, but after the trees are correctly processed, the end result is a product that is as soft as a cotton ball.

Transforming a raw natural commodity into a consumer product for the local supermarket or drug store takes many skilled professionals. Former FFA member Jody Tyson Strickland is one of those professionals.

Strickland, 25, is a "project engineer" for the Proctor & Gamble Cellulose Company in Oglethorpe, Georgia. The plant produces cellulose for baby diapers using slash and loblolly pine trees.

Her job is really one of a trouble shooter. Sometimes the whole plant could shut down depending on her job. Her work usually begins when a mechanical problem is presented to her.

She interviews the workers, studies the system that is currently working and searches for possible solutions. She then does research on materials and designs. She checks with suppliers to see if the technology already exists. "I can design what I need or (the suppliers) can design it, depending on the project," says Strickland. She writes computer programs herself if the need arises.

Since she also works the financial side of the business, she also gets estimates from suppliers or contractors and appropriates the funds when the time comes.

After signing-off on the final designs, Strickland works with the installation of the machinery. She also designs training programs for the people who will work with the new technology.

Strickland has completed one year at her present position. Her climb up the ladder of success has been a quick one. "In college they told us it would take five years behind a desk before you could move into a management position, but here I am," she says smiling.

Strickland received her bachelor of science degree in agricultural engineering at the University of Georgia in Athens and a master's degree from the University of Florida. She received many awards in both academic and extracurricular activities. In 1985 she received the "John Sutton Memorial Award" recognizing her as the "Most Outstanding Agricultural Engineering Student in the Nation." She received the same honor from the Farm Equipment Manufacturers Association the same year.

FFA Helps

Strickland says that her years in the FFA and agricultural education have been a definite plus in college and in her current job. "FFA helps you present yourself each day," she emphasizes. She was the 1981-82 Georgia Association FFA secretary. She says she enjoyed speaking and giving presentations and her experience in parliamentary procedure helped in clubs in college.

She is active in the state FFA Alumni program and is trying to get an Alumni affiliate started in her hometown of Perry, Georgia.

She says the best part of her job is working with so many different people each day, especially for an engineer. The toughest part of her job are the time constraints she has to work with. "You have to be a good time manager. My advice to all students is "Time management–learn it!"

She advises agriculture students interested in engineering to take as much math and physics as possible.

Out of the 15-20 project engineers in Oglethorpe, she is the first agricultural engineer at the plant, something Strickland is highly aware of and is trying to change.

She says that agricultural engineers suffer from an image problem. She has even been introduced as a "cow engineer." "We get the same background (as other engineers) but we apply it to different things. The same principles apply."

For example, she says there are 46 agricultural engineers at nearby Robins Air Force base because they have proven that they work well together as well as being technically competent.

The answer, according to Strickland, will have to come through performance. "It's going to take people like me to get into some companies to show what ag majors can do. A lot has changed (in ag engineering) since upper management was in school."

"What people don't see is that we're an ag company. We're processing the results of ag production, only our crop takes 23 years to mature," she explains. "I love agriculture and I want to see more people in it. It's a personal challenge." •••

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Kurt Aumann has been auctioneering since he was 12. He and his father handle about 85 auctions per year.

Bidding on a Bright Future

When Kurt Aumann is not appraising property or chanting an auction, you can usually find him at his personal computer where he writes and publishes his own antique farm machinery magazine

It's a chilly 20 degrees outside, but Kurt Aumann doesn't feel the cold. The sale must go on, so Kurt and his auctioneering family have moved their trailers and trucks in place to hold another auction. Today everything must be sold, from the house right down to the knickknacks spread out on haywagons lining the front yard. A stream of words gushes from Aumann's mouth, and the crowd's attention becomes riveted. The bidding begins.

For Aumann, a Nokomis, Illinois native, auctioneering is just one of many hats he has worn in his young life. He is also a rural appraiser, a computer desktop publisher, and an antique machinery buff.

Aumann says it's easy to do so many things as long as you enjoy your work. "Everything I do is related to something I'm interested in. If I didn't like to do it I wouldn't be very good at it," he adds.

That desire helped the 18-year-old FFA member win the national FFA Sales and/or Service proficiency award last November at the National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. The award is sponsored by ICI Americas, Inc./Ag Products, Babson Bros. Co./SURGE and Chevrolet Motor Division–Trucks/GM Corporation, as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, Inc.

Aumann is editor, publisher, and owner of *The Belt Pulley*, an antique farm machinery publication. He does all the layout and typesetting on his personal computer using desktop publishing techniques and a little old-fashioned elbow grease. The magazine is printed by a small publishing firm and returned to Aumann for mailing – by hand.

Aumann already has a group of six part-time reporters from around the country supplying information for upcoming issues. *The Belt Pulley* is published every other month, with advertisements, photos and articles about older model farm equipment.

Why a magazine? "When I was 17, I was looking at old rusty tractors and I wanted to know more about them. I looked all over for magazines and books about antique farm machinery and there weren't any around," he explains.

"So I started asking around and found lots of other guys interested. I thought,

"I looked all over for magazines and books about antique farm machinery and there weren't any around. I thought, 'here's an open market.' "

'here's an open market.' I didn't have much experience in the publishing business, but I was on the yearbook staff at school. So I went and talked to a newspaper man. I read and asked more questions."

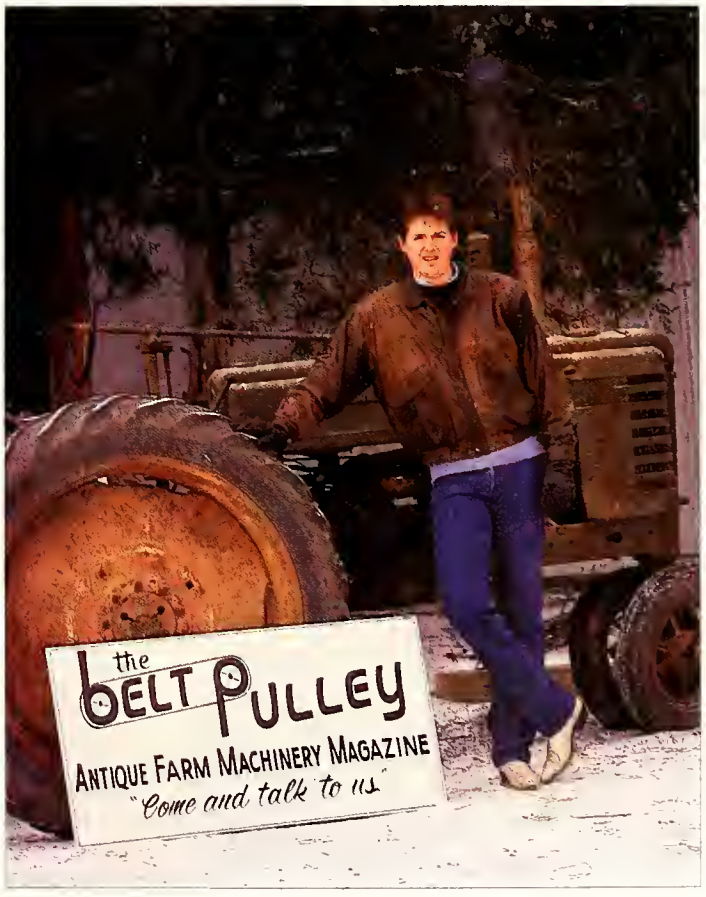
Aumann persuaded his banker to grant him a loan to launch the magazine. "Everyone was skeptical when I'd say 'I'm going to start a magazine,'" Aumann recalls. Undaunted, he pressed ahead with his idea. The first issue came out in November of 1987.

"I'm just now getting to the point where people accept it and know I'm not a fool wasting a lot of paper," he grins.

The Belt Pulley now has 325 regular subscribers. Aumann markets the magazine by contacting antique tractor clubs. He has sent out as many as 4,100 magazines at one mailing to increase potential interest in subscriptions. He figures it will take three years to "get it into the public eye."

Aumann has enjoyed his short career as a publisher. "I think it's a lot of fun, being the first guy to think of something and then do it," he says. A business associate adds: "Kurt will probably be a millionaire by the time he's 30." Then he corrects himself. "No, by the time he's 25."

But Aumann doesn't just write about antique equipment. As an auctioneer he often sells antiques, farmland, household goods - just about anything.



Aumann takes this sign to farm equipment shows to help publicize his magazine. The antique tractor behind him will eventually be refurbished.

The Auctioneer's Chant

Kurt became interested in auctioneering at a young age, thanks to his father, Nelson, also an auctioneer. He attended a two-week auctioneering school at the tender age of 12. Here he learned his "chant" — the distinct rhythm and method of pronunciation each auctioneer must develop for himself.

"Your chant is your style," Aumann explains. "It took me three to four years before I got down my style. At that point you can sell without thinking about it.

"For example if you're jumping (a bid) by dollars, you can't stop to sit and think about what's coming out of your mouth next - it has to be natural."

Aumann was 12 when he auctioneered his first sale, although he did "catch bids" before attending auctioneering school. "Actually, being an auctioneer at 12 was kind of like having a new toy – I wanted to flaunt it."

Back then, Aumann's youthfulness was something of a sales tool. "It was a real novelty for a while," he says. "People would come to see a little kid sell. But I wasn't very good when I started." Aumann knew he had arrived by 1987, when he won the auctioneer's bid calling contest at the Illinois state fair, beating out nearly 25 contestants.

Aumann and his father handle about 85 auctions per year. Typically the Aumanns get a percentage of income during any sale they auction. The percentage varies depending on the type and size of the auction. For example, the Aumanns usually receive 10 percent of the income at a personal property sale.

"Antiques are my favorite thing to sell," says Aumann, who teaches a weekly antique class at night. "If an auctioneer is at a personal property sale he's got to know a lot about antiques. You have to do a mental appraisal and know what price to start the item at. The buyers know I know what I'm talking about, and it keeps the sale going much quicker because it saves time."

Speechless

Aumann credits goal-setting for his achievements. "When I was a freshman in high school, I set a goal to win the state (FFA proficiency award) in ag sales and service," he says. "I always kept the goal in mind throughout high school."

After winning the state award, Aumann was allowed to compete for the national Agriculture Sales and/or Service area, one of 29 proficiency award areas offered by FFA. Winning it all last November took him by surprise.

"When they called my name (at the National FFA convention), I was in a daze," he recalls. "I stepped off the stage and all the radio people were there for interviews."

"For the first time in my life, I was at a loss for words." •••

Taking Ag Education On the Road

Using a special mobile classroom, elementary students in Atlanta and other major Georgia cities are learning about the origins of their food and fiber.

By Andrew Markwart

Rise and shine. It is 2:30 a.m. and it's time for C.D. Brannen and his assistant Bill Baker to prepare for another day of yelling, pushing crowds of elementary students.

For most people, the idea of getting up in the middle of the night to face a supercharged crowd of youngsters all day would be enough to consider a job change–but not for Brannen. He is the state livestock consultant for the Georgia Department of Education and he is on a self-declared mission.

Brannen is responsible for, and the mastermind behind, Georgia's new Agriculture Mobile Classroom and Laboratory. His goal is simple: he wants urban children to understand where their food and fiber come from. According to Brannen, the only way for them to truly understand agriculture is not through textbooks or lectures alone, but through direct exposure to animals. He wants them to see, hear, smell and *especially* touch farm animals to secure in their minds where their food originates.

The mobile classroom is a custom-designed livestock trailer manufactured in Oklahoma to Brannen's specifications and contains pens for various farm animals. The climate-controlled trailer is flexible enough to adapt to crops displays or whatever agricultural exhibit is needed for a particular audience.

With strong support from the state superintendent of schools, the classroom was funded by a $50,000 grant from the Georgia General Assembly. In 1988, the program's first year, 21,000 children visited the classroom. It is booked solid until 1990.

Up to three times each week, Brannen and Baker drive 70 miles from Athens, Georgia, to various schools around Atlanta. They arrive on the school grounds by 6:30 a.m., early enough to be in business for first period classes. "It requires total commitment by the people who run it," says Brannen, but the early morning hours pay off when class begins. "It's all worth it when the first kid steps up here," says Brannen. "By the end of the day, the whole school has gone through and everybody is talking about it."

Brannen delivers high-spirited 30-minute presentations designed for kindergarten through fourth grade students. "We try to relate what animals are economically important in Georgia."

At first, most of the children are afraid of the animals, and the questions start–"Are they real? Are they trained?" But their fear quickly disappears after they are encouraged to touch the animals. Before long, every new animal presented to them draws a response much like a crowd watching fireworks, "Ooo! Ahh! Wow!"

Elementary teachers see many benefits from the mobile classroom. "Many of the children don't get the chance to travel to farms," said Ann Harris, third grade teacher at Woodson Elementary. "It gives them a hands-on experience. It's a great learning experience for all the children."

"By the end of the day everybody is talking about it."
C.D. Brannen

Robert Odom, area livestock and horticulture consultant, far left, joins FFA members Kristie Johnson and Gail Lowman, far right, and Mrs. Ann Harris' third grade class in front of the mobile classroom. *Photos by Author*

FFA members share their knowledge of animals with the young students.

Sharing the Knowledge

Whenever the mobile classroom appears in an area near a high school agriculture program, FFA chapters pitch-in to help Brannen teach the children. The FFA members' knowledge of farm animals and the entire agricultural industry enable the classroom to be more effective since the children can get more personal attention.

Brannen and the FFA members are tackling a growing problem in today's society called "agricultural illiteracy," a term that describes how little the public understands about agriculture.

The agricultural illiteracy problem was a major concern in the recent study on agricultural education released from the National Academy of Sciences. The study found that "most Americans know very little about agriculture, its social and economic significance in the United States."

The mobile classroom, according to Brannen, is the first step in correcting that trend. "We've got seniors in (Atlanta) who have eaten chicken all their lives but have no idea where it's from," says Brannen. "If improvements (in understanding agriculture) are to happen at the higher grades, we've got to get to them when they're young."

Brannen isn't the only education expert who thinks the hands-on experience is effective. Curtis Kingsley, division director of Secondary Vocational Education at the state Department of Education says the mobile classroom will have long-term effects. "We learn based on what we already know. If you've touched an animal, you can visualize it." And, according to Kingsley, visualizing the animals is vital to any quality learning about agriculture in the future.

Kingsley says the mobile classroom is the high point of a five-day section on food and health awareness. Using materials provided through the Ag in the Classroom program, students start studying about food three days before the animals come to town. There is a follow-up day after the mobile classroom visit to talk about what the students have seen.

A positive result of the mobile classroom that no one had planned on was its effectiveness with handicapped children. The walk-through path that winds through the classroom is accessible for the handicapped. There have been as many as 11 wheelchairs in the classroom at one time.

"We're able to touch troubled students with this approach," says Brannen. "We were in one school that had 125 physically and emotionally handicapped students. One mother came back later in the day and said her child smiled for the first time–ever."

For Brannen, those moments that make that 2:30 a.m. alarm clock sound a little bit sweeter. •••

Newton County FFA member Kristie Johnson shows her new friends at the Carter G. Woodson Elementary School in Atlanta that it's okay to touch the animals.

The Secrets of a Winning Speech

Tennessee has had three consecutive national public speaking winners. Here's why.

Last year, Steve Gibson of the Bolivar Central FFA Chapter captivated the national FFA convention audience with "Preparing Agricultural Professionals to Work in a Global Agricultural Industry."

By David Anderson

There is no sure-fire Southern recipe for cooking up national FFA speaking titles but the main ingredients are hard work and preparation according to three speakers from Tennessee. They should know—they've served up three consecutive national championships for their home state in extemporaneous public speaking.

Buddy Coleman won the title in 1986 and Jeff Gilliam won in 1987. They are "best friends", alumni of the same FFA chapter at Lexington High School and they now room together at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. In 1988, Steve Gibson of Bolivar Central High School became the third straight Tennessee speaker to walk away from the Kansas City platform as a national winner. Gibson was the valedictorian of his senior class and is now a freshman at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

"Before Steve won, the big talk was that it was impossible for two people, not just from the same state but from the same chapter, to win the title back-to-back," Coleman said recently. "Then, here comes Steve and now three of us have won it."

Lexington and Bolivar are in West Tennessee about 50 miles apart, have similar populations of under 6,000 and the high schools each have less than 1,000 students. What recipe are they using for their extraordinary national success?

Each speaker has distinctive ways of speaking and preparing but there are common ingredients. The trio praised their FFA advisors and the high quality level of speaking competition and FFA programs in the state. The success appears to be produced by a mixture of those qualities with a huge helping of hard work in preparing, gathering data, having broad knowledge and understanding of timely agricultural issues and practice, practice, practice.

Preparation

"The success of the Tennessee speakers has basically been due to their ability to incorporate new ideas that are happening in agriculture today into their speeches and responses to questions," current titleholder Gibson said. "The only way to be competitive, especially on a national level, is to be a notch above your competitors... and that's what Tennessee speakers have done. We have not just concentrated on biotechnology or agriscience or world trade; we have tried to read line-for-line and cover-to-cover all the materials we could to better present ourselves on stage, give better speeches and answer our questions better." The actual speech in Kansas City is the culmination of months and even years of study and data gathering. The speakers search through piles of agricultural publications for timely articles and compile the 100-page notebook they are allowed to use as a resource in addition to five other resource books.

Lexington FFA Advisor Jerry Wood and Bolivar Advisor Mark Avent said *Farm Journal* was an excellent source and publications such as *National FUTURE FARMER* magazine, *Progressive Farmer*, *Tennessee Farmer* and Farm Bureau publications were vital. Articles are classified in the notebooks by subject areas for easy access. "We try to compile as much information in the classroom as

Buddy Coleman of Lexington, Tennessee, started the trend of extemporaneous public speaking winners from that state in 1986.

we can from whatever source we can get it," Wood said. "We gain information on current farm policies, prices, trends, markets and, generally, what's happening in agriculture."

In the thirty minute preparation period before speaking, the notebook can be a goldmine. "To me, the difference between winning and losing between the speakers was how well your notebook was organized and how well prepared it was," said Coleman.

It isn't enough, however, to have the information in the notebook only. "You can never have too much information," 1987 champ Gilliam said. "Information you carry around in your head is especially good because you don't have to look it up and you can answer the questions with facts and figures. They (judges) love that...you've got to practice but also do the intangible things like reading up-to-date farm magazines and magazines in general."

Gibson absorbed the information. "By the time Steve advanced to the national contest he didn't even need that (notebook)," advisor Avent said. "He had his speech in front of him, really, in his mind before he ever competed. All he had to do was specify three or four main areas he wanted to talk about, organize what he wanted to say and when he wanted to say it and he was done."

The Lexington and Bolivar speakers varied some in practice methods with Gilliam and Coleman spending many hours giving speeches and answering questions in Wood's classes. Gibson said he practiced mostly with Mr. Avent, alone and sometimes he would practice speeches on friends, using spur-of-the-moment subjects. All winners said earlier experience in prepared public speaking was very valuable.

Luck plays a small part in building a winner. "...it takes a little luck to get through a speech without stammering," Gilliam stated. There is also some element of luck in the drawing of topics.

Gibson remembers practicing before the state contest. "I remember the topic I drew in the contest was almost verbatim the same topic Mr. Avent had given me about fifteen minutes before," he laughed. "Before we went over to the contest, in the room, we were just practicing and he'd think up topics off the top of his head."

It helps to know what topics are timely—what will catch the judges ear. "Marketing topics are really strong because that's what the United States must concentrate on," said advisor Wood. "A topic that does well is one that's in the news a lot, people know about it, it's what's happening, it's what the farmer must move toward and marketing is what they have to do."

Jeff Gilliam took the extemporaneous speaking honors in 1987 against tough competition from, left to right, Janel Hofman of Santa Rosa, California; Mark Schmid of Huron Lake, Minnesota, and Chellie Hyre of Winchester, Virginia.

But, what's the secret ingredient to Tennessee's recipe for success? It's sheer desire," Gilliam said excitedly. "A desire, from my standpoint, to instill in others the ideas that I have and to communicate the feelings I have about agriculture and where its going." •••

David Anderson is the assistant editor of *The Lexington Progress* newspaper.

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Unleashed Potential

Researchers continue to discover vast new market opportunities for corn and soybeans

Photo courtesy of Archer Daniels Midland Company

Ethanol-blended gasoline has emerged as an attractive fuel alternative due to its octane enhancement and environmental benefits. Today, ethanol production uses 350 million bushels of corn per year.

Take a trip down Main Street, U.S.A. Stop at the gas station, the print shop, the supermarket, the auto dealer, the paint store or the convenience store. Chances are, although you won't see corn or soybeans inside the doors fo any of these businesses, these commodities are there.

They're present in the form of ethanol fuels, as the sweetener in soft drinks, in newspaper ink, in garbage bags and in cooking oil, food and other products. Industrial and food uses of these by-products now consume nearly a billion bushels of corn per year, and an equally impressive amount of soybean oil, as well.

The new uses supplement corn and soybeans' traditional role as components of livestock feed. They also represent the "new wave" of market development activities being conducts by groups such as the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and the American soybean Association (ASA).

"The ASA is currently emphasizing three major project areas in the United States to increase soybean usage," says Scott Stone, state services manager from the domestic marketing department of the St. Louis-based soybean group. "These include the areas of soy oil ink, dust reduction in livestock feed and promoting soybean oil as a healthy oil through the truth-in-labeling campaign."

NCGA is working on a number of market development areas, including ethanol, degradable plastics and corn sweeteners. Other possible new uses include encapsulated pesticides and carbon black in tires. Of these, according to John Campen, director of market development with the association, ethanol represents one of the largest growth markets, while other projects—such as degradable garbage bags—also could develop into significant usage of corn.

Ethanol—Regaining Interest

In the late 1970's, the American public was introduced to gasohol, a blend of ethyl alcohol (ethanol) and gasoline. Interest in the fuel mainly stemmed from oil shortages and high gasoline prices which prevailed at the time and some 10 million bushels of corn were utilized for ethanol production in 1978.

According to the Renewable Fuels Association, in 1987 an estimated 350 million bushels of corn were used to produce nearly 900 million gallons of ethanol. This usage added about 10 cents to the per-bushel corn price during the year.

"Ethanol is currently building market share because of strength in a few important areas," Campen says. "It's an effective source of octane enhancement, it's environmentally superior to hydrocarbon fuels and it reduces U.S. dependence on foreign oil." The potential for the product in terms of the amount of corn it would use is staggering.

One of the newest areas of emphasis among corn interests is in degradable plastics, products which could develop into a 300-million-bushel market for corn in the foreseeable future, according to Campen.

Mixing starch into plastic is now a major project at the Whistler Center for Carbohydrate Research at Purdue University. Currently, researchers are using a 6 percent starch level in plastic polymers, but that level could rise to 20 percent if research is successful.

Cornstarch—New Uses

Starched-based processes form USDA research labs are leading to a number of additional new uses for corn, according to Dr. William M. Doane, of the Agricultural Research Service in Peoria, Illinois. Some of these include slow-release pesticides, seed coatings and soil stabilizers.

"By inventing new processes for starch, a commodity that sells for about 10 cents per pound, we're endeavoring to add value to it and perhaps improve farming efficiency," he says.

Dr. Robert Wing, one of Doane's colleagues at the Peoria research center, is equally enthused about the possibilities represented by another use for cornstarch, in the form of encapsulated, slow-release pesticides.

"If a pesticide is encapsulated in starch, farmers or gardeners can apply less of the pest-killing chemical than if they used a spray or powder," he says. "The starch-based granules would be safer to handle than a concentrate that has to be diluted before being applied."

Soy Oil Ink

A market for up to 30 million bushels of soybeans per year holds promise in the form of soybean oil ink, a relatively new technology which more than 500 newspapers across the county now employ, according to ASA's Stone. Currently, about 70 percent of all news ink is made from a petroleum carrier which soybean oil can replace, and improve, he describes.

According to George Cashau, director

of research for the American Newspaper Publisher's Association, soy oil ink is fast becoming the standard for color newspaper reproduction. colorful, eye-catching front pages are becoming a competitive necessity in the daily war of rack sales, and soy color inks have proven to be a cost-effective tool in producing the brightest colors for newsprint. The product also has lower "rub-off" characteristics, is environmentally safer and has renewable resource qualities.

Dust Control

Additional new applications for soybean oil, states Stone, lie in the area of controlling dust in grain handling facilities and in livestock feed.

Airborne dust in grain elevators presents fire and explosion hazards. Also, each time a ton of grain is handled, about three pounds of grain dust is lost, causing a monetary loss in addition to the hazards involved.

With the new soybean oil dust suppression method, dust is prevented from becoming airborne, says ASA. Costs for the oil used to treat the grain (it takes about five ounces of oil per ton of grain) are usually recovered through the reduction in shrinkage.

In the area of reducing dust present in livestock feed, the resulting benefits include a more healthy environment for people and livestock, and added energy in rations at a cost as low as $5 per ton, depending on the market price.

The nationwide drought which occurred during the 1988 growing season brought with it higher commodity prices and a reduction in the burdensome grain stock situation in the United States. As a result, some may question the reasoning behind continuing to search for new alternative uses for corn and soybeans.

According to NCGA's Campen, "I think that a year like 1988 has awakened many people about the fact that commodity supplies can be very volatile. In th case of corn, stocks got out of hand over the past several years, and all it takes is a year like this to bring things back into perspective.

"However, a normal of bumper crop year in 1989 could change the scenario again very quickly," he concludes. "Our members now are sensitive to the fact that long-term success is dependent upon ongoing utilization research and market development." •••

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Partnerships Pay Off

Agriculture students from Tulare Joint Union High School in California were big winners in last year's FFA state competitions.

Championships, including high individual honors, were awarded to teams in pest control, farm power and machinery; as well as second place honors in farm records, ornamental horticulture, dairy cattle judging, soils judging and cotton judging. One member won the prepared public speaking contest and competed at the national level; four were elected to the American FFA Degree; one earned the National Dairy Proficiency Award. Eleven earned their State FFA degree.

Behind all this success is an educational partnership comprised of five dedicated teachers, a supportive school board of trustees, a parent advisory board, a booster group and the Tulare Center of the University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and Research, all focusing on a 98-acre working school farm and dairy.

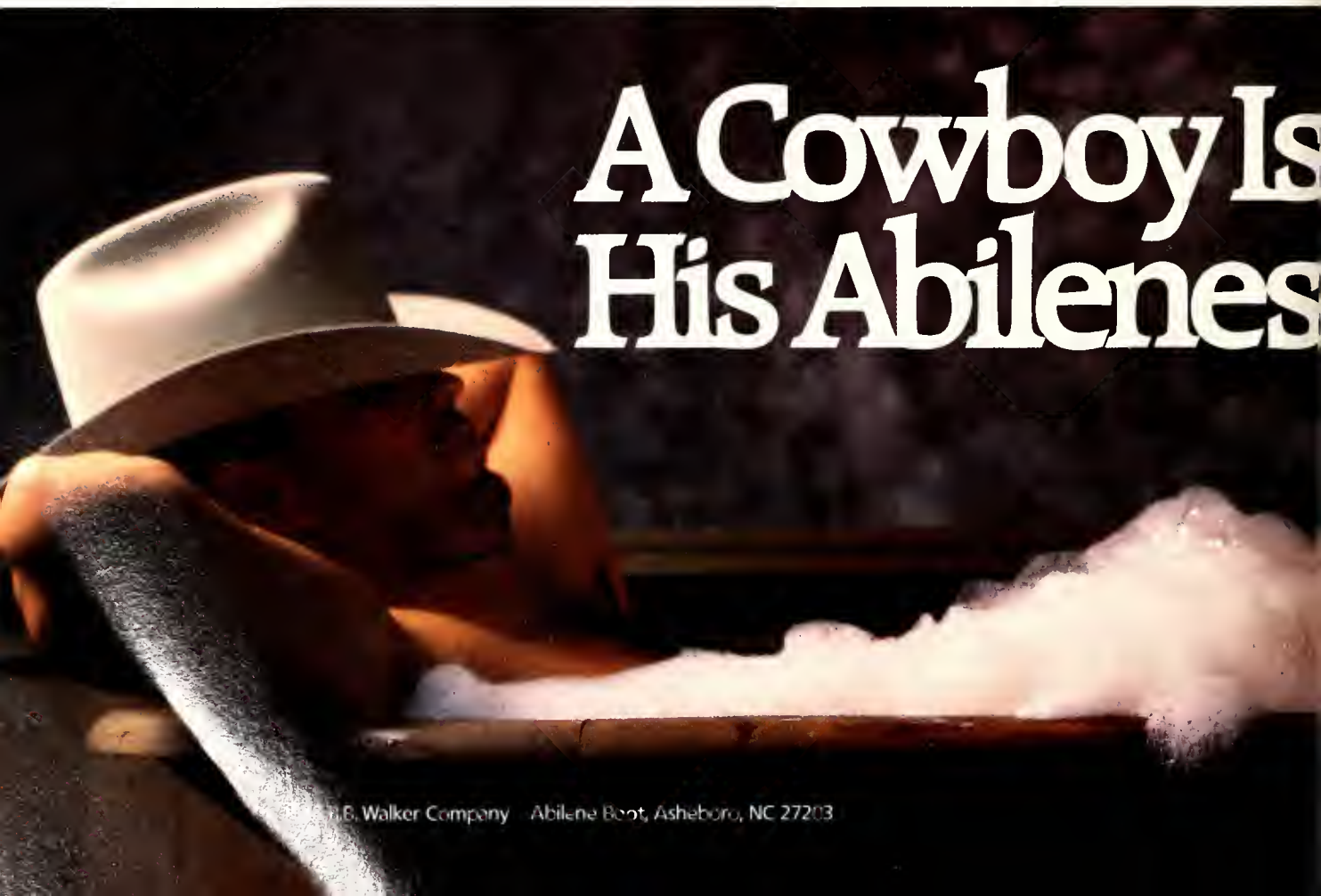
Two year's ago, the school district placed the total operation of the farm in the hands of the high school staff. A previously existing but under-used parent advisory committee was called upon to assist in the management of the dairy with its 55 milking cows, the cultivation and harvesting of the 75 acres of alfalfa and Sudan grass, and overseeing the farm's greenhouse, swine and sheep units, computer lab and student-project barn and area.

The farm advisory committee has only one regular meeting each school semester, but it is not uncommon for the teaching staff to call upon one or more of the "area" specialists when confronted with a problem. Additional parent involvement was solicited through the formation of a booster group. Currently supporting a roster of over 60 members, they provide student scholarships, housing and transportation costs for student judging teams and financial support for the student market animal projects. The boosters' special project in 1987-88 was raising funds to purchase a $7,000 cattle trailer.

Under the supervision of the teachers, students are involved in the operation of the school farm, such as animal maintenance and management, tractor work, irrigation, and repair of buildings, fences and equipment. The results have been rewarding, as measured by student interest, grades and awards earned.

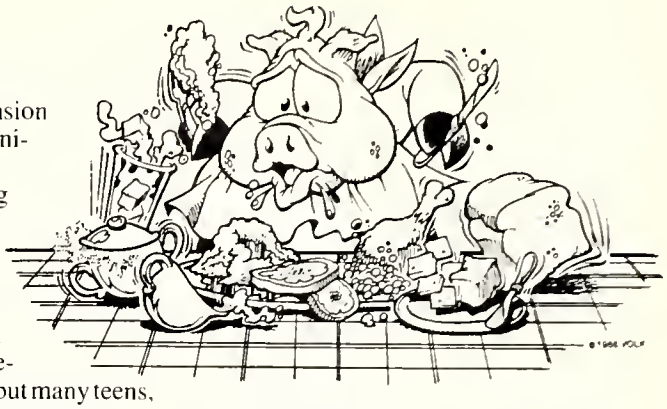
Completing the partnership has been the district's agreement with the nearby School of Veterinary Medicine Teaching and Research Center. The agreement allows the Center to use the high school's dairy herd as its research laboratory in return for providing medical and pregnancy care for the animals and general dairy and agriculture advice.

Bi-weekly visitations to the farm accommodate staff and student interaction. Professors and final-year veterinary or resident students share thoughts and recent developments with the high school agriculture staff and students, allowing the high school to be on the cutting edge of developments in dairy herd management and health care. •••



Junk Food: Do You Know What's In There?

Take inventory of your own eating habits



Most teenagers know what constitutes a healthy diet, but still tend to make food choices that may lead to a lifetime of poor eating habits.

According to a recent Gallup poll of 375 12- to 17-year-olds, 87 percent of teens surveyed said they put "a lot" or "some" effort into a healthy diet.

However, the teenagers listed potato chips, corn chips, cookies, candies and ice cream among their top snack food choices. Hamburgers, cheeseburgers, pizza and luncheon meats ranked among their top lunch choices.

About 63 percent of the teenagers said they learned about cholesterol in school, but less than a third were able to identify cholesterol-rich foods, such as butter and eggs.

"Skipping meals, snacking, eating away from home, eating fast foods and going on fad diets are common teenage eating patterns," said Dr. Mary Kinney Sweeten, a nutrition specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service at Texas A&M University.

In spite of their eating patterns, Sweeten said the nutritional status of teenagers as a group is good, except for a few problem nutrients. For example, teens have higher requirement for iron and calcium, but many teens, especially girls, don't get enough.

"Teenage girls tend to drink soft drinks instead of milk, which may contribute to low calcium status. Yet they need the calcium to build bone mass which will help prevent osteoporosis late in life," she said.

"While teenagers' eating patterns may do little harm while they're young, they are also forming habits which probably will not serve them very well as adults," said the specialist.

It's not too soon for older teenagers to begin thinking about their cholesterol intake either," said the nutritionist. Teenagers can start gradually reducing cholesterol intake by choosing low-fat or skim milk and other reduced-fat dairy products; eating a plain hamburger instead of a bacon double cheeseburger or cutting back on chocolate bars.

All teenagers, and especially those from families with a history of heart disease, high blood pressure or obesity, can reduce their future health risks by working on a regular diet today. •••

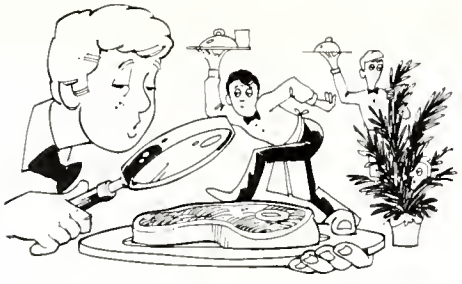
Chapter Scoop

Eagle Point, Oregon, Chapter took a snow recreation day and spent the whole day in the mountains with snow coming down as they rode down the mountain on skis and innertubes.

Last year the **Reedsburg**, Wisconsin, FFA built picnic tables for the school forest and this year will be building benches for the trails.

The 25-foot Christmas tree for the community celebration was chosen, cut and set up by the **Hinton**, Oklahoma, FFA.

A highlight of this year's Christmas party at **Wishek**, North Dakota, FFA was the competition with the school faculty who were special guests - relay races, scavenger hunt, volleyball. The teachers were winners and celebrated their victory with dessert.



The **Merced**, California, FFA chapter had a "steak out" recently. This did not mean the members were stalking criminal suspects but, rather catering two dinners as a fund raiser.

Three good ideas were sent in by **Goddard**, New Mexico, Chapter. They served refreshments to Christmas highway travelers as a safety project; *Gena Dupree* presents a weekly chapter radio broadcast on a local station; and the chapter offered to process the meat for the county fair barb-que in their school meats lab.

Construction crews from **Boswell**, Oklahoma, FFA have built new bleachers for the FFA rodeo and hog and sheep panels for the spring show.

Lincoln, California, FFA leaders provided the opening and closing ceremonies for a brand new chapter - Wheatland - at its first meeting.

They tested 31 wells in **Boonville**, Mississippi, as part of the chapter's helping with *Successful Farming* magazine's national campaign.

Four members of **Berne**, Indiana, FFA received the American Degree in Kansas City in November. It may very well be a record, especially in Indiana. Recipients were *Jeffrey Bauman*, *Matt Lehman*, *Kent Norr* and *Scott Von Gunten*, all graduates of South Adams High. Advisor Schuman also earne his Honorary Degree.

The Genoa Barn Olympics were a competition between **Genoa**, Oregon, FFA and **Oregon Clay** FFA. The games began with the egg toss. Other games included bale stacking, straw hurdles, sack race, arm wrestling and many more.

Officers of **Gilroy**, California, met with school administrators for lunch to explain chapter activities.

Program ideas for the **Cary**, North Carolina, Chapter include a skeetshoot and cookout in the fall; and a floirst demonstration in December for making wreaths and centerpieces.

Members of **Ada**, Minnesota, collected and sold grain to raise money for Camp Courage, a camp for the handicapped.

During American Education Week, **Highmore**, South Dakota, worked with students in grades K-6.

Glen Rose, Texas, joined the ranks of the many other chapters around the nation who select an FFA Member of the Month.

John Bowne Chapter in **New York City**, New York, hosted the district leadership training session and provide "tour service" around the "Big Apple" for the state officers who came to conduct the classes.

Members from **Hidden Valley** and from **North Valley**, Oregon, Chapters got together for an after-school ski trip until 10 P.M. Parents provided transportation.

Like so many chapters who sell citrus, the **Washington Park**, Ohio, FFA gave fruit to needy families .

After a presentation on meat merchandising, the **Union County**, Georgia, FFA served ribs, turkey, pork loin and all the trimmings to school faculty.

In **Grand Bay**, Alabama, members made plywood cutouts of the major swine breeds to use in presentations to middle school students, plus to use on the fair pens this summer.

Jamie Allen was the first member of the newly established Drewry Mason Middle School FFA Chapter in **Ridgeway**, Virginia, to get an FFA jacket.

The **Willcox**, Arizona, FFA chapter entered their float in the annual Rex Allen Days Parade. Rex Allen Days is a big celebration which brings people to a small community from all over the west.

Travelers Rest, South Carolina, Chapter has won first place in the county school beautification contest for the past seven years.

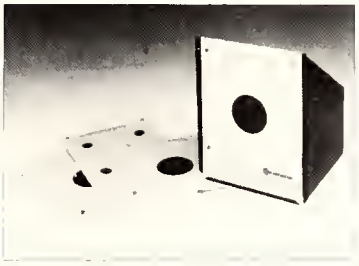
Guest list for **South Dade**, Florida, FFA fish fry included parents, alumni and members from Miami and Miami Wood Chapters.

Editors want to get news about the many chapters who are involved in the Adopt-A-Highway program. We would also want to get photographs for a possible feature story. What are you doing with your section of highway?

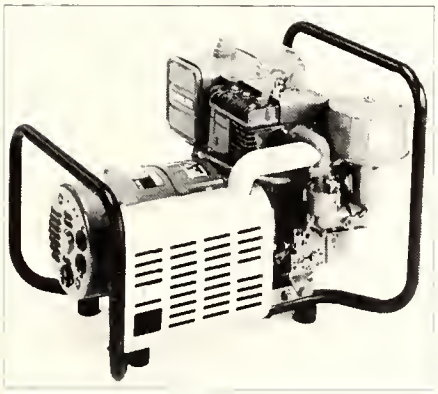
What's New

Suzuki's ATVs available have selectable four-wheel drive and can take riders to remote lakes, campsites or hunting areas inaccessible to a pick-up truck or camper. "It also has a super grippy front differential lock gear setting, an accurate speedometer for spraying or seeding purposes and reverse gear. It even has a fused electrical accessory terminal that can power auxilliary lighting, a winch, or raise or lower an optional snow plow," said Craig Williams, who was heavily involved in the development of the LT-4WD.

Carry good memories in your pocket. That's what Buck's new "Memory" series of four small lockblade knives has been designed to do for outdoorsmen. Each has a full-color drawing on one side, certain to evoke fond memories of a favorite hunting or fishing trip. Featured are reproductions of pheasant, mallard duck, whitetail deer and rainbow trout. The knife itself has a 2-inch drop-point blade, with Buck's positive-locking action.



Marksman® Products provides the target shooting enthusiast with a sturdy all-steel constructed box-like trap that holds NRA regulation paper targets. When lead air gun pellets pass through the target, the Model 2085 traps them, even those fired from the powerful air guns of .177, .20 and .22 calibre.



A light weight, economy-priced series of generators is now available from the Homelite Division of Textron Inc. The generators have special appeal for homeowners, sportsmen and contactors who are concerned about utility blackouts and brownouts. The units weigh from 72 to 105 pounds but produce up to 4400 watts. The electric start model, EHE4400, comes with a battery and a foot-activated starter button.

A new solar-boosted personal strobe signal light available from Precise International serves as an excellent aid in alerting motorists to the presence of cyclists, walkers, runners, school children, and others on roads or roadsides after dark. It's also a good idea to wear the light even in daylight for added personal visibility. The "Sunlight," ™ which includes a front and rear light clipped to a belt or waistband, flashes a powerful strobe light at regular intervals, when the switch is turned on.

Fast Lane to the Job Market

A junior college education can provide you with a degree and put you in the job market within two years of high school graduation

After high school how would you like to receive personalized, hands-on training, a college degree, and still get a two-year head start on your friends who attend a four-year university?

If that sounds appealing, you may be headed for your nearest community, or "junior" college after high school graduation. Here, you can study for two years and earn an Associate Degree. Then you can go right into the job market, or transfer to a larger university to continue your education.

Community colleges have become a good alternative to four-year universities for several reasons, says Dale Parnell, president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC). One obvious reason is money.

"College costs may be rising rapidly at some higher education institutions, but not all of them," says Parnell. "Community, technical, and junior colleges have been successful in containing their costs. In 1987, public community colleges actually reduced their per-student spending, when inflation is taken in account."

University tuition costs have risen steadily over the last five years. The U.S. Department of Education says charges for tuition and fees at the nation's public universities averaged $1,590 in 1986-87. On the other hand, the average annual tuition and fees for public two-year college students totalled only $650 per academic year.

Junior colleges also offer another way to save money for many students, since most live close enough to a junior college to commute there. Parnell says students can reduce the cost of higher education by living at home and attending a local community college. After graduation, students can go directly into the work force or transfer to a four-year college or university after their sophomore year.

Some junior colleges have limited housing facilities for students who wish not to commute. But students who do commute, will save as much as $3,000 per year in dormitory or apartment costs.

Transfer Credits

As Parnell suggests, if you still want to get a four-year degree after two years at a junior college, you can transfer your credits to many larger universities. The net effect is the same: a bachelor's degree from a prestigious four-year university, but at a substantially lower cost.

The key to transferring is good planning and a college academic advisor who knows what your goals are. Your advisor should know which courses will transfer to specific universities. Your transfer process will be even better if you know what university you want to transfer to. Your goal is to make sure a majority, or all, of your junior college classes are eligible to "transfer" to the university.

Usually transfer students take many of the basic, "core" courses during their first two years, at the junior college. Those courses might include English, chemistry, algebra, or speech classes. If you're studying agriculture, you'll still have a chance to take ag classes in junior college, but you will probably take the majority of your ag classes in your area of study after you transfer to the university.

"Typically, students who plan to transfer to a four year school enroll in ag transfer programs which are specifically designed for this," says Randey Wall, public relations chairman for the Illinois Association of Community College Agriculture Instructors (IACCAI). "Several universities have cooperative agreements with the community colleges that allow graduates of applied science (agriculture) curriculums to transfer with a minimum of difficulty."

One midwest study shows that about 20 percent of all junior college ag graduates transfer to larger universities. Ken Olcott, Dean of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Cobleskill College of Agriculture and Technology in Cobleskill, New York, says about 40 percent of his agriculture graduates transfer to universities or other four-year college programs.

The advantage of transferring runs deeper than cost-savings. In your first two years at the junior college, the smaller class sizes will give you more one-on-one opportunities with instructors. Required, freshman-oriented classes at major universities can have as many as 300 students.

Junior college programs have one other advantage over four-year colleges. Most offer an internship experience so that students can get real hands-on job experience – just like in FFA. "Community college instructors work closely with many local and state businesses in setting up these experiences," says Wall. Adds Olcott: "The thing we're trying to do is provide students with more of the hands-on application of ag technology. We're still emphasizing technology rather than basic theory or science."

Community colleges offer agriculture programs in four major areas: ag production/management, ag business/service/supplies, ag mechanics, and horticulture. The AACJC compiled a list of colleges offering two year degrees in the following areas: 178 programs in ag sciences, 88 in ag technologies, 63 in agronomy, 25 in ag edu-

cation, 35 in ag economics, and 227 in ag business. Some of those programs are listed more than once since the college offers more than one degree program.

This range of study is a bit limited compared to a larger university. But if you plan to transfer, you can still take the appropriate junior college classes, then take more specific classes in your field at the university.

Good Demand

"But can I get a good job with a junior college degree?" you might ask. Yes, say many ag educators. "There currently is an excellent job market in each of these areas," says Wall. "A frequently quoted phrase is three to five job offers per graduate." Entry level salaries range from $12,000 to $16,000 per year, he adds.

Most graduates go directly into the job market, and those who take jobs stick with them. A study by Joliet, Illinois, Junior College instructor Stan Kosiba discovered that over 80 percent of all former graduates were still employed in agriculture. And of the ones who were not, their junior college agriculture education appears to have a direct bearing on their current occupation.

Here's a closer look at some of the jobs you can get with a junior college education:

Production agriculture jobs are limited, but there's good demand for specialists, such as in swine management. Jeff Galle, an agriculture instructor at the John Wood Community College Swine management program, says there are currently three to five job openings for each student that goes through his swine management curriculum. Jobs range from assistant herdsman to manager of a swine operation. Salary, including benefits, ranges from $12,000 to $20,000 per year.

Ag business jobs in service or supply also show good demand. Junior colleges train students for entry level jobs in the fertilizer, chemical, grain, feed and seed industries. Roger Herriman, agriculture instructor at Illinois Central College in East Peoria, says there is a steady demand for his graduates in these areas. "They typically enter the job market in sales positions or as support personnel," he says. Salaries range from $14,000 to $18,000 for a full-time position.

A junior college education can land you a good job in the farm equipment industry also. Equipment dealers who have survived the hardships of the past are stronger, larger, and more economically stable than before. Prior to the 1980s, dealerships relied on equipment sales for income. Today, the emphasis is on parts and service, creating a need for the trained service technician. Dealers need technicians that understand high technology in hydraulic, electronic, and power train systems.

A typical horticulture education could qualify you for a number of different jobs. Many students are being prepared for entry into fields such as landscape design and construction, golf course maintenance, garden center sales, nursery plant production, greenhouse production, or floral shop sales and installation. Other jobs include grounds maintenance, irrigation and lighting sales and installation, and interior plant maintenance.

And you won't necessarily have to give up FFA when you attend a junior college. Some junior colleges have a Collegiate FFA chapter, or a National Postsecondary Agricultural Student (PAS) organization. PAS is a youth group for students who study agriculture in institutions that offer less than a bachelor's degree. This 10-year-old organization has chapters in 19 states at 70 junior colleges and vocational technical institutes. •••

Utica FFA Members Learn CPR/First-aid Skills

By Gerald Smith, Jr.

Photos by Author

FFA member Richard Horn, practicing the first step in CPR, has made an assessment and determined the "victim" is unresponsive then summons for help. Fellow Student David Cook is the "victim." Below, William Hutton prepares to perform CPR on a mannequin.

Above, FFA advisor/first-aid instructor Sammy White shows FFA member Christie Bufkin how to recognize and handle emergency equipment.

High school students learn the basics of citizenship in their first civics class. Members of the Utica, Mississippi, FFA Chapter have a somewhat unique opportunity to practice good citizenship by "learning " and "serving" as they become skilled in CPR and basic first-aid.

Like many small towns and communities, Utica (population about 1,000) has no hospital—the nearest being 30 miles by ground ambulance—making the need even greater for more persons with first-aid skills.

Chapter advisor Sammy White is one of the town's few Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) having been active in the community's rescue efforts since 1980. His certification as a CPR instructor in 1987 gave him a new opportunity to serve and to expand a program he'd begun some years earlier.

"I always taught safety more than the (FFA) curriculum requires because of the accident and emergency situations I've been called to and the realization that accidents can be prevented," White says. Some accidents are, unfortunately, not prevented. White stresses the need for people to "learn basic first-aid skills so they will know what to do until the victim is in the care of advanced medical personnel."

During the 1987-88 school year, 25 Utica FFA members received their CPR certification from the American Heart Association. One course is taught in the fall and one in the spring in four week sections.

"Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)", contends the American Heart Association, "when properly performed and early enough can save between 100,000 and 200,000 lives each year in the United States."

In addition to CPR skills, Utica FFA members are taught to handle such conditions as bleeding, shock, fractures, burns and seizures. Safety on the farm, especially in the use of farm equipment, is emphasized. The farm safety aspect of the class is supplemented by a slide presentation from the Hinds County, Mississippi, Farm Bureau. •••

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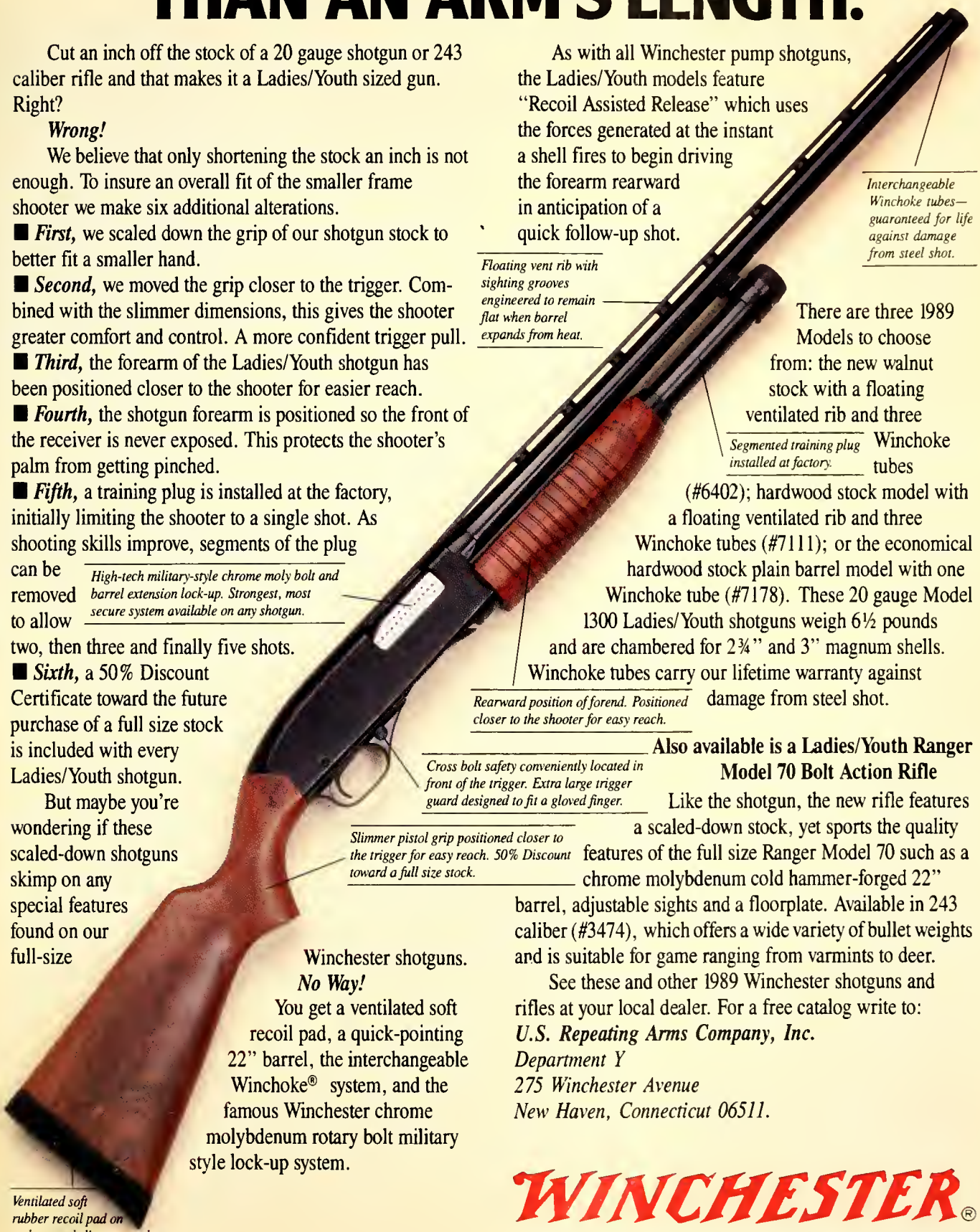

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FFA members learn about themselves, their friends and success in two days...

Weekends are "Made For Excellence"

by Jeri D. Mattics

Photo by Jim Lantz

Winning the big game, catching a movie or hanging out with friends, a date with the girl or guy of your dreams... the makings of a great weekend, right?

FFA members across the country are adding a new activity to the list—attending a Made For Excellence conference. Personal development is the conference's main focus and the sessions are presented with such a high level of energy participants can't resist getting involved.

For many, the conference is a way to get mentally "charged up" and fight off the winter blahs . "This conference has pumped me up, charged my battery and reinforced the goals I have for myself," said Becky Mizelle of Williamston, North Carolina. Her fellow members agreed.

A key ingredient to the successful weekend are the staff members who know their audience. Made for Excellence (MFE) staff consists of past national officers and Washington Conference Program (WCP) counselors. This year's staff members are Kevin Eblen, Iowa; Dean Harder, Minnesota; Cheryl Helmeid, Wisconsin; Rob Millman, Indiana; Doug Phillips, Ohio; Michelle Benoit, Kansas; and Darin Coert, California. Marshall Stewart, a past WCP director, serves as MFE manager.

"The staff was great. They were so enthusiastic. It seemed like they really believed in what they were talking about. And it wasn't just words, they live what they teach and they've been through a lot of what we're experiencing now," said Sarah Jervis, president of the Cary, North Carolina chapter.

Tricia Ramdass, chapter treasurer from Cary, added, "They were on our level. You can tell they've been there and they shared their experiences with us."

Understanding Yourself

One of the first conference activities helps participants understand themselves. Participants fill out a "personality finder" to identify their strengths. Once those strengths are identified, participants learn how to utilize them to their best advantage. "I learned more about myself this weekend than in anything else I've ever done," remarked one member.

Conference materials include personality descriptions to assist participants in understanding why they react the way they do in day-to-day activities. They also learn how and why others react the way they do.

For instance, when working with a group (such as a chapter officer team), understanding the personalities involved can make setting and accomplishing team (chapter) goals easier and more rewarding for everyone involved.

Friendship, Peer Pressure

The next subject tackled is friendship and subsequently, peer pressure. Kevin Eblen, past national president and a MFE staff member, says, "We try to make everyone realize how much of an effect friends really have on someone. We've all been there and it's important that the students know they're not alone in facing the challenges of high school.

"For instance, there is tremendous peer pressure to experiment with drugs and alcohol. Surrounding yourself with friends who accept you for who you are is crucial to resisting the pressure to fit in," explains Eblen.

Along with helping participants deal with peer pressure, this section identifies the importance of friendship. Lorinda Flynn of West Cravan, North Carolina, was deeply moved by the session and, in a voice brimming with emotion, whispered, "I'll be moving away soon and this conference has made me realize how little time I have left to let my friends know how much I care."

Saturday evening finds each group planning a "Made for Failure" day. The make-believe days are often hilarious, but always realistic. Most groups include such things as having to take a cold shower because the hot water heater was broken, losing a huge term paper the day before it was due, and wrecking someone's car.

After everyone has planned a "Made for Failure" day, they plan a "Made for Excellence" day. Marshall Stewart, MFE manager, says, "By planning to have a great day, we tend to see 'challenges' instead of 'obstacles.' It is said that 90 percent of the way we feel is determined by the way we want and expect to feel. Whether you think you'll have a great day or a lousy day, you'll be right, so you might as well expect great days."

Sunday's MFE schedule is devoted to setting personal goals and creating a plan of action to achieve those goals. The first step is identifying goals in several areas including school, physical fitness, family and friends. Next, the staff leads everyone through a "plan of action."

Many of the subjects tackled at Made For Excellence are personal in nature yet those in attendance don't seem shy in sharing them. "The conference staff sets the example by sharing their experiences. After that, you don't feel intimidated at all

Nearly 2,000 FFA members filed into Made For Excellence conferences this past year. Conference participants receive support from MFE counselors, fellow FFA members and below, their advisors.

Photo by Jen Mattics

Photo by Jim Lantz

to share your thoughts," said Casey Huang, reporter for the Cary chapter.

By the time MFE is over, each participant has a personalized notebook full of goals and a plan of action to achieve them. More importantly, everyone goes home with new friends and a new understanding of themselves. The most common comment around Sunday noon is, "I don't wanna go home! I'm fired up!" •••

Made For Excellence conferences offer FFA members the chance to set personal goals and have fun doing it.

Excellent Information

Made for Excellence conferences are sponsored by state FFA associations in cooperation with the National FFA Organization. They begin Saturday at 10:00 a.m. and conclude Sunday at noon. Made For Excellence was held in 12 states this year including California, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Florida. Made For Excellence is presented on weekends beginning in September and running through March.

For more information about Made for Excellence conferences in your state, contact your local advisor, state FFA association office or Marshall Stewart, MFE Manager, at the National FFA Center, P. O. Box 15160, Alexandria, VA 22309-0160.

Agrichemical Retailers Address Issues

"If you brush your teeth and use soap, you are using pesticides," asserts Ken Root, executive director of the National AgriChemical Retailers Association (NARA).

Obviously those compounds are much different from the ones we use to control pesky weeds and harmful insects, but chemicals affect all our lives.

Root and Fairfield, Iowa, agrichemical dealer Dan Frieberg, both FFA alumni, are working to promote the safe use of agrichemicals and to develop a greater public understanding of agrichemical benefits.

"We've done a poor job of communicating the benefits of agrichemicals," says Root. "Most of the information you hear about pesticides today is negative." Root is working with members of NARA to change that perception. The 1,500-member organization was formed in March 1988 as the first national pesticide-retailers association.

"We want to present the facts," he continues. "Agrichemicals are beneficial, and they benefit the consumer as much as anyone else because they allow us to have a bountiful and stable food supply."

Spectrum Communications Photo

Handling agrichemicals responsibly is something every user can do to protect themselves and the environment.

The detection of pesticides is very sophisticated, notes Root. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for acceptable levels of pesticides in soil and water. "Interpretation of the data is key," says Root. "In most cases, the levels of pesticides detected are insignificant."

> ***"Agrichemical use is a public debate about the risks and benefits of food production technology, and we're going to deal with it for the rest of our lives."***

Root and Frieberg agree that regulation of pesticide use should be made on the basis of science not emotion. "I'm convinced a lot of issues surrounding agrichemical use will not be decided by science," states Frieberg. "They will certainly be influenced by public perception and what is politically popular." Some of the issues, Frieberg contends, will be influenced by the way farmers and retailers manage pesticides so risk to people and the environment is minimized.

"Good product stewardship (using the product responsibly) for a handler, for example, would include protective clothing such as a face shield and gloves, and the way you dispose of the container," he notes.

NARA also works to inform farmers, retailers and the public about major issues in the field of agrichemicals. Among these are groundwater protection, proper chemical application and environmentally sound container disposal.

"It's important for people to know that the vast majority of agrichemicals do not leach into groundwater from normal use," Frieberg says. Simple safety precautions can prevent groundwater contamination. He offers these basic tips:

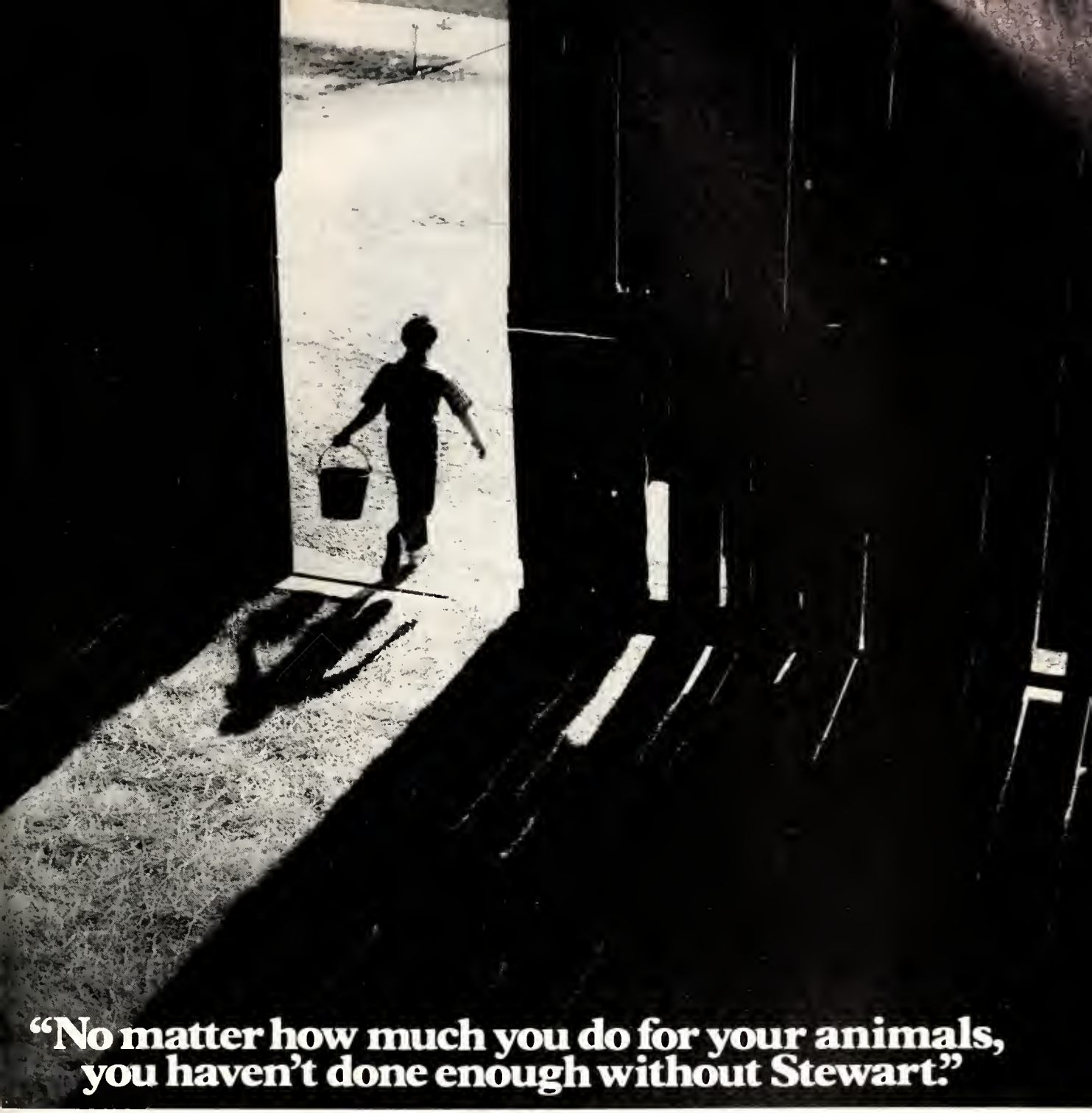
- Don't mix chemicals near your water source; instead, transport water to the field and mix chemicals there. If a spill occurs, chemicals are in the field where they belong.
- Carefully select chemicals that fit individual field conditions. Your agrichemical dealer can help you choose chemicals that will provide safe control even on sandy soils that are most susceptible to leaching. He will also advise you of chemicals that will maintain a safe environment for endangered species.

Frieberg says the best information source for proper chemical application and use is the product label. Certified applicator training programs, university extension and chemical manufacturers also are good resources.

Frieberg believes the concern about safe chemical use is an enduring one. "It's a public debate about the risks and benefits of food production technology, and we're going to deal with it for the rest of our lives," he concludes. "But we can enjoy the benefits of agrichemicals and be environmentally safe if we follow good product stewardship practices." •••

Frieberg was an active member of the Fairfield High School FFA chapter in Fairfield, Iowa, and served as Iowa state FFA president.

Ken Root was a member of the Luther, Oklahoma, FFA chapter. After graduation from Oklahoma State University (OSU), he taught vocational agriculture for several years.



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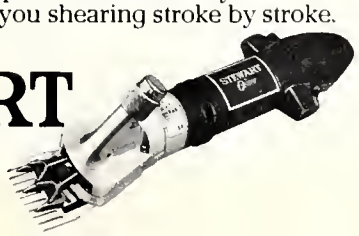

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FFA In Action

Matt Hedrick is pedalling hard to pull the farthest to win. After the participant couldn't go any farther, each pull was measured. The top ten in each division were announced and everyone received a prize. The local newspaper covered the event with pictures and a story.

Indiana

Pedal Power

A kiddy tractor pull was operated by Southmont, Indiana, FFA during the county fair and it was one of the most popular activities at the fair. It was held in front of the arena and portable bleachers were needed for the large crowd. There were over 100 youngsters in four divisions who participated in this event.

The chapter contacted area business to sponsor prizes for the winners.

The Ladoga Lions Club also invited FFA to conduct a similar pedal tractor pull during their annual fish fry held at the Ladoga community park. Grandparents, parents and Lions appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to view the youngsters in action and called the pull a great success.

FFA conducted another pull in addition to these two for the volunteer fire department. This has been a very good community service activity and more and more people are recognizing the FFA and its activities.

Their chapter cooperatively owns a pedal tractor along with North Montgomery FFA for activities like this. (From the National Chapter Award application)

Indiana

Grandmas and Grandpas

Southmont, Indiana, High School also sponsored Grandparent's Day during school last October. The FFA chapter decided it wanted to be a part of this because it would be an excellent public relations activity. The event was a huge success and very well received in the community.

There were over 200 people at the FFA presentations. In addition to grandparents we also had 37 eighth grade agriculture students and 20 ninth and tenth graders listen to the presentation.

We brought an Angus steer, sheep and a quarterhorse into the agriculture shop for the presentation. Members explained what to look for in judging the live animal, how to groom and also what to look for when selecting high quality meat to buy.

Other members brought in plants from the greenhouse and labeled them so that the grandparents could see what each one was. Poinsettia and mum production schedules were also discussed. Members explained forestry judging, crops judging and soil judging.

Grandparents all judged the sheep, then the members gave the correct placings and reasons for them. Everyone signed up for a drawing and during each of the three presentations we gave away a free half box of the fruit we were selling.

To the grandmothers our floriculture judging team showed them some flower arrangements. The floriculture team demonstrated how to make the arrangements and answered questions.

Visitors had the opportunity to ask questions about FFA and agriculture department activities. They could also place orders for our FFA sales projects. By conducting the presentations in our ag department visitors had a chance to see what we are trying to accomplish first hand. (From the National Chapter Award application)

Oregon

Such a Crowd

In December the Douglas, Oregon, FFA had their first Christmas party in the history of the chapter. There was a short business meeting followed by the party, at which a gift exchange took place. At the party, a movie, "Three Men and a Baby" was shown and refreshments were available to those who wanted them. The officers decorated the Christmas tree and also pitched in to buy a gift that was presented from the chapter to our advisor, Mr. John Baird. The party drew a higher attendance than the regular business meetings. (Angi Thomas, Reporter)

Florida

Squeeze Your Own

The LaBelle, Florida, Chapter planted its own orange grove in December. They planted 118 trees in the fenced area behind the ag classroom. Irrigation was installed in November by the ag classes, too. Varieties of trees planted included Navel, Orlando, Hamlin and Valencia. Red grapefruit was also planted.

Ohio

Model Hunters

Members of the West Muskingum, Ohio, FFA and Wildlife Officer, Jerry Wade, presented different hunter safety skits to 60 participants in the FFA sponsored public hunter education course.

Chapter members acted out various skits and then had the participants point

(Continued on Page 46)

Agricultural Mechanics' Competitive Edge

Industry Leaders Help Keep Agricultural Mechanics Contest on Track

Sam Harrel photo

The ag mechanics contest measures skills, knowledge and problem-solving.

For anyone associated with agricultural mechanics, the names are instantly recognizable: Firestone Tire and Rubber, John Deere, Case-IH, Deutz-Allis, Briggs and Stratton, Butler Manufacturing.

These corporations are only a few of the many industry supporters of the National FFA Agricultural Mechanics Contest and the support goes beyond writing a check every year. Top people from these types of companies serve on the National Agricultural Mechanics Committee.

The committee decides what changes and improvements need to be made to the contest to keep it current with the skills needed in today's agricultural mechanics industry. For example, in the past four years, microcomputers have been incorporated into the problem-solving area of the contest.

Dr. Victor Bekkum, associate professor of agricultural engineering at Iowa State University is superintendent of the Agricultural Mechanics Contest. He sees the industry's input as critical to the continuing success of the contest. He said recently in *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, "The industry experts who serve on the committee review the examination questions, skill and problem solving activities for technical correctness. Their valued technical support and advise complements the instructional expertise provided by the university and college teachers."

"The end result," continues, Bekkum, "is contest activities that are up-to-date, practical and relevant to today's agriculture. Most of the industry representatives in addition to reviewing the contest materials also make the annual trip to the contest to serve as judges or perform other official contest roles."

Many of the companies, such as Briggs and Stratton, furnish equipment and materials for the national contest held in Kansas City. To keep the contest fair, six to 12 pieces of identical equipment, which would cost the FFA large sums of money, are supplied on location every year by industry sponsors.

The Firestone Trust Fund, the charitable organization of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, has gone an extra step in encouraging excellence in the field of agricultural mechanics. Each year, $12,250 in scholarships are awarded to team and individual contest winners and other FFA members who have competed in state agricultural mechanics contests. A total of twenty scholarships ranging from $500 to $1,000 are currently awarded.

Bekkum concludes that, "Whether in computers, electrical controls, machinery monitors, construction techniques and materials, or soil and water management, the agricultural mechanics industry and the National Agricultural Mechanics Contest are in the thick of high technology. Industry and education working together as partners becomes ever more important to keep the contest up-to-date in the future."

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FFA In Action

(Continued from Page 44)

out good and bad hunter safety practices.

Four members presented a skit illustrating the highly undesirable practice of spot lighting and poaching of deer. Officer Wade then made a simulated stop and apprehension of the suspects and explained to the class what could happen to each of the violators.

The course was conducted in cooperation with the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Tennessee

Floating High

The Dickson County FFA in Tennessee decided in November to try to win the float division in the county Christmas parade.

The float was designed by the chapter officers to fit the parade theme "Christmas Time in the City." The FFA float had a store front with canopy, street lights, a

The red and white float was created with napkins and the backdrop included a large FFA emblem.

cart carrying Christmas presents, a tree for the town and a snowman. A generator was used to light up the tree, street lights and special spot lights on the store, cart and snowman.

Amy Boyd, reporter and Richard Greer, vice president, rode the float and John Underhill, president, pulled the float with the chapter's truck. The float won top prize. (Amy Boyd, Reporter)

Illino

15 To and What Do You Ge

Over 250 g s what you get if you do what the Wy g - Toulon, Illinois, Chapter did. In ruary of 1988 the chapter acquired 1 ns of 1"x1/4"x22' steel from the Natio Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources.

Several ideas were suggested and the chapter decided on a gate cooperative. The gates were made to 3x10, 5x10, 3x16 and 5x16 sizes. They were then sold to chapter members and area farmers.

A time clock was put in the shop and co-op members were paid one dollar an hour to make gates. A board of directors was selected to run the co-op, set prices and keep track of sales. Members bought shares for $2.00 each and received a dividend at the end of the year.

The chapter submitted this cooperative program for the Illinois Farm Bureau cooperative activities award and took third in the state out of over 100 entries.

As a result the chapter was able to send two members to the 1988 National Institute of Cooperative Education Conference (NICE) in Rochester, New York. The pair, in addition to 43 other members and advisors from throughout Illinois, toured National Grape (Welch's), Upstate Milk Producers, Kodak Co. and Niagara Falls. (Joe Winans, Reporter)

Ohio

Paint On the Pride

A remodeling project by Genoa, Ohio, FFA members has made the FFA office a more useful location. The project improved the appearance of the office as well as improved the use of space and gave the students a chance to use their carpentry skills. The FFA office reflects a proud image of the chapter.

The office was repainted and new carpet added to the floor. The labor was done by a team of members. School staff did all of the electrical improvements. An old tool room was added to expand the office and a new tool room built in the shop area.

New furniture for the office included new desks and tables assembled by members. (Vicki Colvin, Reporter)

Kansas

Students Eat Results

Do you know what makes popcorn pop? This question was part of the experiment when Plainville, Kansas, FFA harvested their popcorn grown from seed in the horticultural plot beside the agricultural department facility.

Students helped throughout the summer to water, hand hoe, fertilize and harvest. They learned to appreciate and understand the time and work involved in carrying out a horticultural project from beginning to end.

Much of the garden plot is planned in accordance with fair time as far as maturity and peak of production is concerned. Conditions, even as unfavorable as they were this summer, did allow for a terrific harvest of popcorn. Some was shucked shortly before the county fair and the drying process speeded up to allow for exhibiting. The rest was harvested the second week of school to provide more students the opportunity to learn.

Seven exhibits of popcorn were displayed at the fair. Three of the four in FFA received a purple ribbon while the fourth received a blue. In open class, all entries received premiums.

Harvesting and then shelling the kernels from the cob by hand was by no means the fastest process in the world. In theory the operation was much the same as harvesting by combine.

The operation provided students an exposure to a relatively new crop that is profiting Kansas agriculture.

An old popcorn popping machine at the school that was virtually a junker was rewired, reconstructed, cleaned, scoured and put back together by members. Not only did the machine provide students with a challenging project, they also enjoyed the payoff by eating the product.

Answer to the question: a tiny moisture cell inside the kernel expands when heated, eventually causing a rupturing or bursting of the kernel with the end result being the fluffy white mass enjoyed by millions. If the moisture cell is not present, usually due to extremely dry conditions, the kernel will not pop.

According to the chapter, the situation can be remedied by adding a tablespoon of water for every quart of popcorn and then placing in the refrigerator over night. (Wayne De Werff, Advisor)

Missouri

Shout It Out Loud

On the morning of October 11th, KODE channel 12, an ABC affiliate, came down to tape the McDonald County FFA chapter in Anderson, Missouri. Over 90 FFA members were taped saying the ever-famous, "Good Morning America."

The public relations committee is claiming full credit for the activity promoting FFA.

Watch for these FFA members when they do wake-up duty on "Good Morning America" May 11th.

Holiday Helpers

FFA In Action news has arrived from many chapters about their special efforts during the Christmas holidays to support their communities. Here are their stories.

Ysleta FFA in El Paso, Texas

So many times families are unable to even have a decent meal for Christmas much less enjoy Christmas goodies. So Ysleta members took on an important task of cooking dinners and delivering them to the homes of 25 families. The meals were actually prepared at the chapter's annual Christmas party. Students filled containers with a ham-and-all-the-trimmings dinner and delivered the meals confidentially to needy homes. The families were chosen with the help of a local church. The Young Farmers and the FFA Alumni helped deliver the meals.

Wynford, Ohio, FFA

The Wynford FFA donated 1,382 cans of food for the Salvation Army's annual canned food drive. The chapter challenged the other organizations and classes in the school to beat them at collecting the most canned food.

Lawton, Oklahoma, FFA

The Lawton FFA held it's annual Christmas party and play-night in a school gym. Admission was any kind of paper product — like plates, cups, towels or napkins. The paper products were then donated to a local shelter for abused children. (Chuck Payne, Reporter)

Sheridan, Oregon, FFA

The Sheridan FFA donated wooden push toys to children listed on a local Giving Tree.

The toys, wooden ducks with rubber flopping feet, were made in the school shop by FFA members under the supervision of Advisor Meyer. "The members enjoyed making the ducks for the kids, and they learned how to work in an assembly line situation. We probably will do something like this again next year. The students like projects like this," Meyer said. (Tray Waggoner, Reporter)

New Mexico

Benefits for Barn Builders

For the past two years the Goddard Chapter in Roswell, New Mexico, has been actively involved in improvement of livestock facilities at the Eastern New Mexico State Fair grounds. The initial project of the chapter was a new swine barn with a capacity to hold 500 head of market swine.

This past year the Goddard Chapter worked with the New Mexico Wool Growers Association to construct a new educational facility on the fair grounds. Chapter officers worked with Mr. Bill Snipes, publicity chairman of Wool Growers, in designing a facility that could meet the needs of both organizations. The Wool Growers were looking for a means of promoting the wool and lamb industry while the chapter was looking for the right place to present the Food For America program to the community.

Chapter members designed a facility that would enclose a wool growers demonstration area and also provide livestock facilities so members could conduct the Food For America program. The proposal was sent to the American Sheep Producers Council who approved a grant of $15,000 for construction but local contractors estimated a cost of $30,000 for construction. So Goddard members obtained a variety of building supplies in the community at no cost and the center was completed within the grant limit.

FFA members were responsible for much of the project construction which gave students an opportunity to utilize skills developed in the classroom.

The chapter completed the facility just days before the 1988 fair began. For one week members of the Wool Growers Association and the FFA conducted demonstrations and sponsored a petting zoo. Coloring books, farm safety materials and livestock information pamphlets were distributed.

Local television stations and the newspaper publicized our project leading to an excellent public attendance. Over 35,000 visitors walked through the facility.

(Continued on Page 48)

New Mexico Governor Garrey Carruthers and Goddard FFA Chapter members discuss baby pigs with one of the young children who visited the exhibit.

FFA In Action

South Dakota

Building For the Handicapped

The Salem, South Dakota, FFA Chapter helped improve their school by constructing a ramp at the entrance to provide access for the handicapped. (Fred Butzke, Reporter)

Ohio/Minnesota

Computer Exchange Via Ag Ed Network

The Amanda-Clearcreek, Ohio, FFA Chapter recently traveled to visit with their agriculture exchange school in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. The chapter members are linked up with students from the Eden Praire Middle School this year by way of online computer via the Ag Ed Network. They have been exchanging ideas and answering questions about agriculture from the middle school class members.

The Minnesota students have been exploring agriculture in Ohio and the FFA chapter members have been exploring agriculture in Minnesota.

Ohio FFA members got to meet in person with their pen pal-like-computer-exchangees in a Minnesota Middle School.

The recent visit allowed seven Amamda members to be hosted by the Middle School where they toured a dairy farm, a crop farm and the College of Agriculture.

The chapter members share weekly information with the middle school students and currently the chapter is participating in the middle school's corn growing contest. The FFA was sent corn and asked to grow it. Then they report via computer how fast it grows and how tall.

The computer online exchange has provided an opportunity for each group to learn more about agriculture in both states. The Eden Praire students even hosted the chapter members to breakfast and put together a trivia game on Ohio.

On stage for the ceremony, left to right, are commander of the 365th; school principal McKay; speaker Nestor; members Morey Gaddy and Chris Young; and the quartet—Bill Williams, Joel Wilder, Stephen Johnson and Darin Williams.

Alabama

Red, White and Blue Memories

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. The Jacksonville "Gold" Alabama, FFA Chapter remembered this historical event on December 7, 1988, in the local university stadium.

The program started with four parachutists bringing in the gavel. The 14th Army Band and the FFA quartet entertained the crowd with patriotic songs. Jacksonville State University ROTC provided the color guard.

Sergeant Major (Retired) William A. Nestor was our guest speaker who told about his recollections of the day. The event ended with a 21-gun salute by the 365th Transportation Company while taps was being played.

Chapter president, Chris Young, was master of ceremony for this program which was planned as a BOAC project to build community pride. (John Whaley, Advisor)

New York

Cold Weather Campers

In January, 35 members of the Madison, New York, FFA Chapter attended a subdistrict winter weekend at their state camp. Camp Oswegatchie has 1,200 acres of land and is located in the heart of the Adirondack Mountains.

In the winter months, chapters rent the camp for the weekend. Members stay in the main building, Sutliff, which has a kitchen, dining room, recreation room and two dorms. Some outdoor activities offered during the weekend are skiing, snow shoeing, sliding, ice skating, football and a snow sculpturing contest. Indoor activities consist of cards, board games, ping pong, pool and a dance.

The best part of the trip is getting to meet new friends from other chapters. (Shari Bennett, Treasurer)

My Turn

with

Warren L. Boerger

In January, I had the privilege of visiting businesses and FFA chapters in Louisiana with the state officer team. State treasurer Bryan Bonner told an old Indian legend of a young Indian who went up a mountain. While walking along a steep path, he saw a rattlesnake and quickly picked it up just behind the head. Since this was an Indian legend, the snake was able to talk, and he begged, "Please put me down and don't hurt me, if you do, I promise not to bite you!"

The young Indian did not want to believe him, but since the snake had promised not to hurt him, he put the snake down. It bit the boy. As the snake slithered off and the boy lay dying, the boy cried, "You promised not to bite me! Why did you?"

The snake simply replied, "You knew what I was when you picked me up!"

Life would be so much more enjoyable if we really took the time to look at things before we picked them up. When we were small children we were told, "Don't play with fire, you can get burned," or "Don't run in the house, you can fall and break something!"

Life is too fragile to run the risk of driving drunk.

During those times we would listen for maybe five minutes, and then trot off and try it out.

But that was when we were children and today, it doesn't always work that way. If you drink and drive, it only takes one time to bring everything to an end.

On January 1, 1989, we celebrated the beginning of a new year with our friends, yet in the span of one year, several of us will mourn the deaths of 5,000 of our teenage friends due to drunk driving.

Each and every one of us has been touched by the terrible acts of a drunk driver. The problem is that these tragedies could have easily been prevented with common sense and "knowing when to say when."

I had a friend who had everything going for him in the FFA. He was a chapter officer and earned several chapter awards. He even had a fantastic shot at his state degree and other state proficiencies, and then one evening on the way home, it ended.

After an evening with friends at the movies, a drunk driver struck his car head-on and killed him instantly. The driver then continued on, speeding away from police, only to be killed after hitting a telephone pole.

This story isn't told so that we could all say how terrible that driver was for wrecking an innocent family's life, rather that we realize how easily the roles can be reversed if one chooses to drink and drive.

Too many times we look at challenges or problems in life and say "that couldn't be me." Yet for the most part, everyone reading this article knows or has been affected by someone who has been out of control when driving. Life is too fragile and there is too much at stake to run the risk of driving drunk.

The FFA presents young people with the opportunity to show their responsibility and develop confidence in making good decisions. Driving drunk is not only a bad decision, it may prevent tomorrow from becoming a reality.

Countless FFA chapters and state associations have held anti-drinking and driving campaigns. They have worked with the Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) organization as well. I commend these chapters and thank them for taking an active role in helping and protecting their friends.

Please realize, when you drink and drive you don't just risk damaging someone's life, you can terminate it. Remember the snake's quote, "You knew what I was before you picked me up! •••

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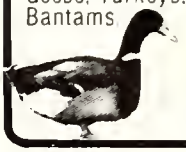

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Joke Page

One cold winter morning, my husband heard our neighbor making unsuccessful attempts to start her car. He went outside and asked: *"Did you try choking it, Mary?"*

"No," she replied. *"But I felt like it."*

Oliver E. Frazier
Rock Hall, Maryland

Customer to barber: *"I want a haircut. Don't cut any off the top, the side, or the middle. Do you know what I want?"*
Barber: *"Yes, you just want me to make some noise with the scissors."*

Jeff Michalak
Spring, Texas

Their young son spent a week at camp.

"Every morning, they make you get up early for ravioli," he explained, *"but, then they never give you any."*

Bobbie Mae Cooley
Bowen, Illinois

"Dad says you're a pharmacist. Are you gonna assist our farm?"

A little girl from the south, seeing snow for the first time, asked *"What is it?"*

"That's snow, dear," answered her mother. *"What did you think it was?"*

"It looks like popped rain!"

Maguerite Reasner
Indianapolis, Indiana

Q. Does a potato farmer use a steam roller?
A. Yes, if he wants mashed potatoes.

Scott Stanley
Clintwood, Virginia

A farmer goes to the attorney and says he wants a divorce and the attorney tries to talk him out of it. *"Do you have any grounds?"*

Farmer: *"Yup, I've got 30 acres."*

Attorney: *"No, that's not what I mean—do you have a case?"*

Farmer: *"Nope, I've got a John Deere, that's what I farm the 30 acres with."*

Attorney: *"No, no, you're not understanding me. Do you want to bring a suit? Have you got a grudge?"*

Farmer: *"Well, I've got a suit hanging at home in the closet, and the grudge—that's where I keep my John Deere."*

Attorney: *"Oh, we're not communicating at all. Lets talk about your wife for a minute. Do you beat your wife up?"*

Farmer: *"Nope, she gets up about 4:30, 'bout the same time I do."*

Mary Weber
Cool Valley, Illinois

"Okay," said the traffic cop, pulling out his notebook. *"What's your name?"*

"Sylvester Fauntleroy Thistlewaiter," the young man said.

"Well," said the officer, putting his notebook away, *"Don't ever let me catch you again."*

James Meyer
Darien, Wisconsin

Husband to Wife, *"I quit my job at the Farmers' Market because I broke a toe."*

"How is it?"

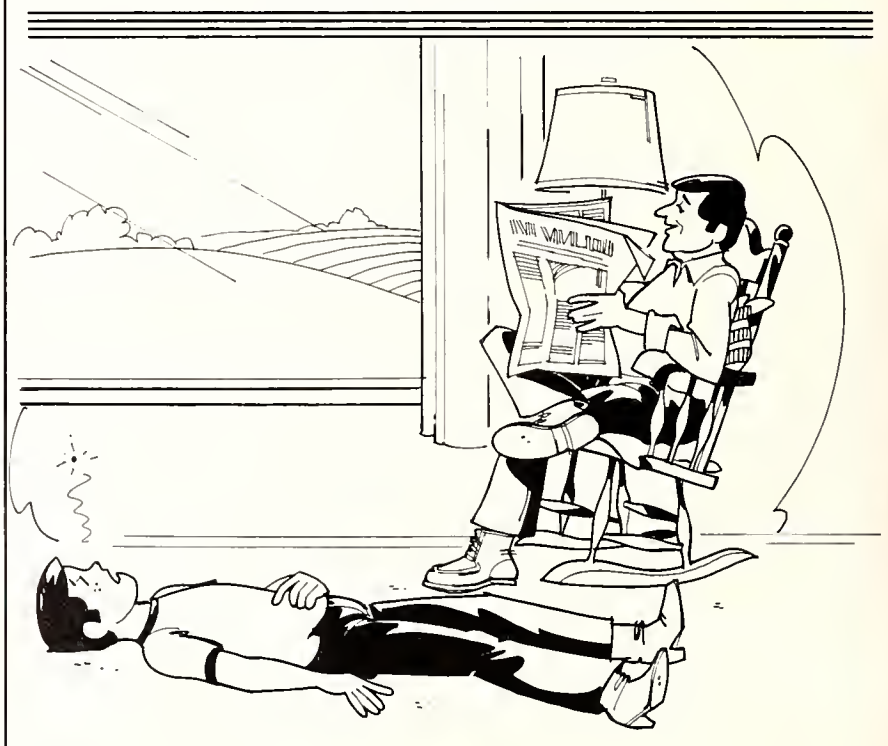
"I don't know. It wasn't my toe."

Dan Gazlay
Sevierville, Tennessee

Q. Why don't you drink Kool-Aid?
A. Because we can't figure out how to get a quart of water in those little packages.

Northwest Cabarrus High School FFA
Concord, North Carolina

Charlie, the Greenhand



"Are you sure $25 and the car keys are enough?"

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